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The Young Hero of Cape Ann; Or, The Fishing Trip of an American Boy.

By ROGER STARBUCK.

CHAPTER XIII.

A LEE SHORE.

THE three fugitives followed the directions of the Irishman, and, as he had said would be the case, they soon came to the water.

Peering through the gloom, they beheld a dark object approaching.

By the light of a lantern carried by one of the occupants they perceived that it was a boat containing reinforcements for the English.

"Who's that?" came a rough hail from the boat.

"None of your darned business!" answered Tom.

"Fire!" cried a stern voice.

George quickly drew Bertha behind a rock just in time to avoid a storm of shot which came rattling shoreward.

"We must git out of this!" cried Tom, who was by his side.

"Ay, ay," said George; "we must look for some hiding-place among these rocks!"

He drew Bertha along with him, and the three finally reached a hollow among the rocky masses in which they crouched.

They heard the boat soon after, as it glided alongside of one of the rocks, and its occupants sprang out.

But the search made for them was a brief one, the reinforcing party being evidently in a hurry to reach the scene of combat.

As their receding footsteps died away George arose.

"That boat they were in looked like ours," he said; "the one which we left aboard of the *Falcon*. But I could not tell for certain in the dim light. I will go and see. You, Tom, wait here until I come back."

"Hadn't I better go?" said Tom.

"No," replied George, who feared that the old fisherman would not conduct himself with the necessary caution. "You stay and take care of Bertha until I come back."

"Pray be careful," she said, laying a hand on his arm. "Oh, what would I do in case you should not come back?"

The half tender voice in which she spoke thrilled the youth with pleasant sensations.

He pressed her hand gently, and assured her that he would be careful.

Then he left the hollow, cautiously and swiftly approaching the spot where the boat was to be found. Peering from behind a rock, he perceived that two marines had been left in charge of it.

That it was the boat from the *Falcon* he could not doubt, for a ray of moonlight, now streaming down through an opening in an overhanging mass of rock, revealed it quite plainly to his view.

George resolved to endeavor to repossess himself of this boat.

But how was he, alone and unarmed, to do so?

Each of the marines held a musket, and the faces of both men were turned toward the shore.

The two were conversing.

"I don't fancy being left here," one was saying, "when there's fighting going on—do you, Bill?"

"Not a bit of it, Fred. I think they might have left a couple of sailors."

"Well, as we are here, and as it will probably be some time before they come back, we may as well make ourselves comfortable, and have a smoke."

"I'm with you there, Fred; but we mustn't be caught at it."

"We'll keep our eyes about us."

They laid their muskets alongside of them, and taking out their pipes, proceeded to fill them.

"This is good tobacco we found aboard that old craft," said one.

"Yes, and by-the-way, Fred, what a queer-looking craft she was, with the tree for a mast. I could have put up a better mast than that myself, if I am only a *marine*."

"It's just like an Irishman to put up such a thing as that for a mast."

"What did you cabbage from the craft, Bill?"

"Nothing much. What did you?"

"I found two silver tablespoons stowed away on a dark shelf in the cabin pantry. They're aboard the sloop-of-war now, in my trunk."

"Your muskets shall pay for those silver spoons, my fine fellows," thought George. "I will find them useful."

Cautiously emerging from behind the rock, which was within a foot of the boat's bow, George, reaching over, caught at the muzzles of both muskets, which projected over the gunwale, and quickly pulled them out.

The noise startled the two marines, whose faces had been turned down upon their pipes as they were filling them.

They sprang to their feet, to behold George

"THEY SPRANG TO THEIR FEET, TO BEHOLD GEORGE STANDING BEFORE THEM WITH ONE OF THE MUSKETS POINTED AT THE HEAD OF THE FOREMOST MAN. 'NO NOISE, OR I WILL SEND A BULLET THROUGH YOUR HEAD,' SAID THE YOUTH."

READ OUR GREAT STORIES—"THE JANITOR'S BOY" AND "THE MYSTIC THREE."

standing before them with one of the muskets pointed at the head of the foremost man.

"No noise, or I will send a bullet through your head," said the youth.

"Hello! Who are you?" inquired one of the men.

"It does not matter. Tom, this way," he called to his friend.

Old Tom was at his side in two minutes.

"Take the other musket, Tom," said George, pointing to the weapon, which he had rested against a rock.

"Ay, ay. Now, darn me if this ain't what I call a neat business. How did you get these party pieces?"

"I will tell you by-and-by. Leave the boat," he added to the marines.

"Suppose we refuse?" said the foremost man.

"You are dead men if you do," said George.

"Ay, ay, dead enough," said Old Tom. "But if you get out of the boat we won't hurt you, as we have no quarrel with you."

"You are very kind," said the marine, sarcastically.

"Come, bear a hand," said George. "We can't wait."

The two marines got out of the boat.

"Come, Miss Palmer," called George; "this way."

As she was but a few steps off, she quickly appeared.

"Please step into the boat," continued the youth to the young girl. She did so.

The captain and his old friend followed.

The warp was severed, and seizing an oar, Tom sculled the boat away from the coast, while George, musket in hand, stood watching the marines.

Distance soon hid them from sight.

Then George set the rig sail, and as there was a good breeze, the boat sped on her way.

The moon was now obscured by clouds, but, in the dim light, the occupants of the boat could see the *Falcon* ahead.

About a mile further off, another vessel could be faintly distinguished.

This was evidently the sloop-of-war from which the English sailors and marines had come to attack the Irish smugglers.

As George peered through the gloom, he could make out the form of some person walking to and fro on the deck of the *Falcon*.

"That is probably some one on the watch—some one of those who boarded the *Falcon* from the war craft," he said to Tom.

"Darn it, yes!" said Tom. "What are we to do now? Wonder how many there are aboard?"

"Not more than this one, I believe," said George.

"Leave it to me; I'll manage him."

The boat was soon within hailing distance of the *Falcon*.

"Boat ahoy!" came from the schooner, in a strange voice.

"Ahoy! All right!" answered George, endeavoring to imitate the hoarse voice of one of the two marines. "We have been sent back to the craft for more men."

"More men!" cried the lookout, somewhat puzzled. "How is that? You know I am the only one aboard except the prisoners."

"I know it," answered George; "but the captain had an idea that some of the prisoners would help us—the Americans, I mean."

"Perhaps they may; but I don't think so. The Irishmen we have in the hold say that those fellows belong to their gang."

"We will see about that," said George. "I don't believe them." Then, turning to Old Tom, he added: "You perceive I was right. We have only one man to deal with."

"Ay, ay, but we must be cautious. It will not do for Miss Palmer to show herself until after we gain possession of the craft."

"No, as she sits, she cannot be seen. The brig-sail hides her."

The boat, a few minutes later, was directed under the bow, where she was nearly concealed by the shadows it cast upon the water.

Making fast the warp to the bobstay, and slinging their muskets over their backs, George and Old Tom clambered up into the bows.

The moment they reached the bow, and ere they could spring to the deck, the marine on watch saw them plainly enough to perceive that they were strangers.

He uttered an exclamation of surprise, but before he could use his musket George sprang upon him and wrenched the piece from his hands. Whirling him to the deck by a quick, powerful effort, the young man held him down.

"You are our prisoner," he said. "No noise, or you are a dead man!"

"Curse you!" said the marine; "if I had only known this sooner, you would not have got aboard so easily."

With the assistance of old Tom, George tied the hands and feet of the prostrate man, who, perceiving that resistance was useless, quietly submitted to his fate.

The boat was then taken alongside by Tom, and as soon as it was made fast Bertha was helped aboard.

George then procured a lantern and entered the hold, while Tom went to seek Jenny, whom he found locked in her room.

In the hold the young captain discovered about six Irishmen, and all his own men, tied hand and foot.

At sight of the welcome visitor his first officer, Coleman, uttered a cry of joy.

George cut asunder his lashings.

"How is this?" he said, looking around him at the bruised faces of many of his crew. "You did not permit these six Irishmen to take the craft?"

"Six?" cried Coleman; "there were twenty-one in all, and they were all armed, whereas we had nothing to fight with."

He then went on to explain:

"Not long after you had left the craft a large, scow-like boat came alongside, with twenty-four of those fierce Irish fellows aboard. They came on deck and attacked us. As there were then only nine of us, of course they soon overpowered us. They tied us and thrust us into the hold. Half an hour later the six men who had gone with you came back, and were, in their turn, made prisoners by the Irishmen and shut in here with us. They informed us that they believed you had met with foul play ashore, as they had heard cries soon after you landed, and had caught a glimpse of many forms moving among the rocks. They had, therefore, hurried back to the vessel for assistance, not being aware that the craft had been captured. Shortly after, the Irishmen had not long been masters of the vessel when we heard a great commotion on the deck, as if they were running to and fro.

"Soon after came the report of firearms, with the noise of a brief conflict.

"Finally these six Irishmen were brought here, into the hold, by a large party of English marines and sailors.

"We endeavored to make an explanation, and to persuade them to release us, which I dare say they would have done had not the Irishmen declared that we belonged to their gang of smugglers, but that we had mutinied, and they had therefore put us in confinement.

"They seemed inclined to believe this, and so we were left here in the hold, as they found us."

George released all his men, and also the six Irishmen, after he had described to them what had taken place ashore.

"You are at liberty to leave the craft aboard the boat in which you came," he said.

"Fair and the boat ain't there no more," said one of them. "When we saw the English marines and sailors comin' alongside, as many of us as could get away, fifteen in all, jumped aboard the boat, and away they went, without waitin' for them as were left behind, so that here's only a part of us altogether."

"Then we will have to land you somewhere on the coast," said George.

"All right, sir; and many thanks, considerin' the way we trated your men. But, you see, we didn't know how things were goin' to turn out."

George now made all haste to raise his anchor.

This was done as noiselessly as possible, after which the one sail was loosened, and the craft glided off in the darkness, leaving the sloop-of-war further astern every moment.

A mist, which had gathered, favored this movement.

There was not, evidently, aboard the English war-vessel the slightest suspicion that the *Falcon* was under way.

"And now," said one of the Irishmen, pointing to the bound marine, still prostrate on the deck, "you'll give this English divil to us, captain, won't ye?"

"No," said George, who had resolved to permit this person to go ashore with the asylum-keeper when the latter should be ready to land. With his assistance the man could eventually obtain passage aboard some vessel bound for England from a neighboring seaport on the coast.

Two hours later the six smugglers were put ashore by the young captain near a small fishing-village, after which he continued on his course.

The marine was then unbound and kindly treated by the crew of the vessel.

By morning the *Falcon* was near the place where the asylum-keeper desired to land.

He pointed out the old ruin in the distance which had been fitted up as a habitation for the insane.

Half an hour later George came up into the wind, and had his boat ready to take the keeper and the lunatics ashore.

The madmen, still bound hand and foot, were first lowered into the boat. Then the keeper entered it, the marine following.

The party were pulled to the beach, after which the keeper went to the asylum to obtain assistance to convey the lunatics to the building.

He soon returned with a wagon, containing also a couple of his assistants.

The madmen were placed in this wagon, after which both the keeper and the marine bade farewell to the young captain and his men.

George now returned to the *Falcon*.

Heading away from the coast, he stood about northeast, so as to give the land a wide berth, as there were signs of a change of wind and of bad weather.

"Well, my boy," said Old Tom, "what are we to do now? I see nothing for it but to head back for Nova Scotia."

"No," said George; "I have not yet given up the hope of finding Miss Palmer's father and his crew."

"Well, things don't look very promising, so far," said Old Tom. "If we could only fall in with that craft—that Northerner, or whatever she is—which the Irishman spoke of, we might hear something."

"I will find her yet, even though I have to cruise to the end of the world for her! Do you know what I think?"

"What?"

"I believe that the people we are looking for are aboard that craft, and that the craft itself is caught fast somewhere in the Northern ice."

"Then we should go north to look for them; but darn me if I believe we will ever make much headway in a vessel like this, with her crazy mast and one sail."

"No, we will first have to obtain possession of our own vessel, the *Columbia*."

"The Lord only knows where she is now."

"She is not far from here."

Old Tom started.

"How do you know that?" he inquired.

"By what I saw when we took the keeper ashore. Did you not notice that one of the men in the wagon had a silk scarf about his neck with a white star on it?"

"I did not notice it," said Tom. "I was looking at the lunatics most of the time, and congratulating myself on our having at last got rid of those outlandish people."

"Well, I have seen Will Brent wear that scarf. Its being on the neck of the man in the wagon proves that he has been here, and that lately, if I am not mistaken."

"I dare say, boy. Nothing more likely than that he should be cruising off the coast. It's the mackerel season, you know, and there's plenty of that sort of fish hereabout."

"If we could only fall in with the *Columbia* away from the *Briton*, we might succeed in capturing her by some stratagem."

"The Lord grant that we may! My heart is with our own beautiful craft."

As George had feared would be the case, the wind soon after blew a heavy gale.

Its direction was toward the coast, whose dark, frowning ramparts of rock could be seen looming up not two leagues to leeward.

The gale kept increasing in violence, and soon the seas were breaking over the craft, sweeping her decks fore and aft.

As he was off a lee shore, George had kept the mainsail standing while he headed along, and as closely hauled as the state of the weather would permit.

He was now obliged to put a reef in the sail, for the wind came roaring down upon him like a hundred guns, while the spray was blown in white sheets all about the craft.

The land, somehow, seems to keep getting nearer," said Bertha, who stood by the captain's side.

George endeavored to speak composedly.

"Yes," he said; "the mist and rack magnify it."

Bertha laid her hand on his arm.

"This explanation would do for one not quite so much used to the sea as I am," she responded; "but you must remember that I am a sailor's daughter. The coast is one of the causes, I know, of the coast's looking larger and higher, but it is not the only one. We are fast drifting down toward those terrible rocks."

"You are right, Miss Palmer; we are. Still having yet a hope of clearing the rocks, I thought it best to say nothing about it to you, as I would not needlessly alarm you."

"Thank you, I see," she added, looking toward the rocks; "you hope to be clear that rugged point off there, and get into the sheltered bay beyond?"

"That is what I shall try to do, and that is why I still carry more canvas than the craft seems able to bear."

Bertha looked at the point earnestly for several moments.

"You will not get round it in time," she said. "We may as well be prepared for the worst."

"No, it may not be so bad as that. Something may yet turn up in our favor—a slight lull in the gale or a change of wind."

"Possibly, but I fear the worst. I shall be ready for it," she added.

George gazed with admiration upon the beautiful girl who could thus calmly look forward to a catastrophe which would probably prove fatal to all on board.

Her face had slightly paled, but the dark eyes and the pretty mouth bore an expression of quiet resolution.

She stood close by his side, holding with one hand to the rigging, and he could now and then feel her dark locks as they were blown by the wind against his neck.

"Had you not better go below?" he said. "The seas are breaking round us heavily."

"No; I will remain on deck till the end," she replied.

As she spoke the vessel plunged violently, causing her feet to slide from under her on the slippery planks.

She pitched forward, and would have fallen to the deck, had not George caught her with one arm.

This caused her to reel against him, and for one brief moment he thus unavoidably held her to his breast.

Even at so perilous a time both the young people were conscious of a thrill of pleasure, although Bertha's averted face and drooping eyelashes would not permit him to read her feelings.

Blushing as he released her, she caught hold of the rigging with both hands.

Meanwhile, the vessel dashed on.

She was every moment drawn nearer to the frowning rocks.

"We are going ashore, my boy. Nothing can save us," said Old Tom to George.

But the latter, who had been watching the sail intently, made no reply.

The canvas, which had previously been shaking, suddenly filled.

"Luff up there at the wheel!" he shouted.

The helmsman obeyed, and the craft came up a quarter of a point closer, thus favored by a slight change of wind.

Few of those aboard, however, thought she would clear the perilous point.

Soon she was within fifty yards of it.

The crew looked at each other with pale faces and compressed lips.

Not a man spoke.

All believed that they were doomed.

George stood forward, clinging to the rigging, heedless of the spray and the foaming cataracts of water with which he was drenched.

Several times he was nearly washed from his feet, and only saved himself by the utmost exertion of his strength.

The rugged rampart of rocks loomed up off the lee bow, not further than forty fathoms from the vessel.

The young captain looked up at the sail.

"Shake out one reef from that canvas!" he shouted through the trumpet he held.

But not a man moved.

Swaying and cracking, the spar looked as if about to go over.

It seemed as if this catastrophe must take place the moment another reef should be loosened.

"Do you hear, there?" repeated the youth.

"Ay, ay, sir!" cried one of the crew; "we will go, if you insist, but he who mounts that mast may as well make up his mind never to mount another!"

"If you are afraid, I will go!" said George. "I would not send you where I myself would not venture."

Heedless of the remonstrances of his crew, the youth swung himself into the rigging and ran up the shrouds to the yard.

Bertha uttered an exclamation of terror.

The mast, snapping and bending with every plunge of the vessel, was now shaken with a violence that almost threw the daring boy from his position.

With a swift hand, however, he loosened the reef-points, first to the windward and then to leeward.

As the last point was untied, the sail bellied out, and then gave a slat that knocked him from the footrope!

There was a scream from Bertha and a cry of dismay from the men.

But George, as he was going, caught at the gasket, which had become unwound.

He slid down almost to the end of it ere he could keep his hold, and there he hung, swaying like a pendulum over the foaming, boiling waters.

"Save him, quick, or he will be lost!" screamed Bertha.

"That I will do!" cried Old Tom, "or else, darn me, if I don't perish with him!"

He caught up the end of a coil of rope and quickly made a noose.

Springing to leeward, he threw it dexterously, so that it caught about the waist of the imperiled youth.

The latter, no longer able to maintain his imperfect hold, dropped into the foaming, raging waters.

"He is lost!" cried Bertha, wildly.

But Tom now hauled on the rope, assisted by several others, and George was being thus pulled in toward the vessel, when all at once the rope, which had been rubbing against a jagged edge of the copper sheathing on the rail, parted.

The boy threw up his hands and endeavored to strike out in the tumultuous waves.

But they rolled over him and hid him from sight.

"He is gone!" cried Old Tom, with a cry like that of a wounded tiger.

As he spoke there was a crash.

Ever since the vessel had been shaken out the mast had been swaying with a violence that rendered its fall inevitable, but the additional breadth of canvas had so increased the velocity of the craft that she was in a fair way to weather the dangerous point, past which she was now rushing, not three ships' lengths from it!

It was at this moment that the crash came as the mast gave way.

Down it went, falling to leeward, but still held to the vessel by its larboard stays.

"Clear away the wreck!" shouted Coleman, the first officer.

But Tom caught his arm, so, ax in hand, he rushed toward the dragging spar.

The old fisherman pointed toward the further end of the mast, tossing about in the sea.

All aboard, looking in that direction, beheld first the hands and then the arms of the young captain, as he caught hold of the fallen spar.

At length he was seen to lift himself from the waves and creep along the mast toward the vessel, aboard of which he was finally helped by Tom and some of the men.

"Thank God for this!" cried Bertha, as she impulsively grasped both hands of the brave youth.

But George looked toward the rocks.

"We have passed them," he said. "The vessel is saved."

CHAPTER XIV.

ASHORE.

"AY, thanks to your loosening the reef," said Coleman; "we have cleared the point, but you came near sacrificing yourself to do it."

"We will say nothing about that," said George. "Clear away the wreck at once. We have still much to do."

The fallen mast was soon cut adrift.

With no sail to help guide it, the hull was, by wind and wave, driven on into the bay beyond the point.

It was at length carried into a part of the bay which was somewhat sheltered from the gale by towering masses of rocks.

Ahead there was a strip of beach, but it was evident that it would be necessary to lower boats and tow the wreck to this strip, otherwise it would strike on the rocks to larboard, toward which a current was now drawing it.

The sea not being so rough here as it was outside, George soon had the boats down and commenced the work of towing.

After several hours of hard labor the men had the hull in shallow water, where it grounded within twenty yards of the beach, in a good, sheltered spot.

The hull went over almost on its beam ends, with the water and the spray breaking over it, yet not with sufficient violence to damage it.

"Well, here we are," said Old Tom. "I don't think we can ever, without assistance, get the hull afloat again."

"We never can," answered George.

"Nor is the hull, in its present condition, a fit place to remain in."

"No, we will have to go ashore," said Coleman.

George mounted a rock and looked about him. Not far off he saw a house. It was situated on a rise of land, was of small size, and looked as if in the last stage of decay.

The roof, patched in many places, was overgrown with moss, and the posts upon which the house was built sloped sideways, as if about to give way.

The building had neither windows nor blinds—had only one hole, not large enough for a boy to squeeze through, near the roof.

"It's a queer-looking consarn," said Tom, when the young captain pointed out the house to him. "I rather guess it's never been inhabited, but has been built for a sort of storehouse."

"We will go and look at it," said George.

He and Tom went to the building and entered through the doorway. There was now no door attached to it, although one rusty hinge remaining betokened that there had been such a convenience there.

The two entered a small room on the first floor, and thence mounted, by a dangling rope, to the second story. Both rooms were alike, containing neither laths nor plaster, nor a single article of furniture.

"Ay, ay, you can see it has been used as a storehouse," said Tom, pointing to the remains of some barrel-hoops in a corner.

George looked through the hole which served for a window.

It commanded a view of the country, which was wild and desolate, without a solitary hut or house in sight.

"We will make this our place of abode while we keep a lookout for some passing craft," said the young captain. "As to the *Falcon's* hull, we cannot live aboard that in its present condition."

"No," said Tom; "to say nothing of her being nearly on her beam-ends, she has stoven a hole in her timbers and leaks badly."

The two returned to the beach, and the young captain now gave his orders.

After the women had been landed the boats were pulled to the wreck, and all the provisions aboard, enough to last for several weeks, were finally taken out and conveyed to the shore.

The few axes, hatchets, canvas, ropes and spars aboard were also brought to land.

Before night all the things were in the house, and a sort of door of tarred canvas had been fastened over the outer opening, to keep out the rain which was falling.

It was now night, and as soon after supper as Bertha and Jenny had retired to the quarters which had been prepared for them in the room above, now easily reached by a ladder brought from the wreck, George placed a man on the lookout outside. All the others, throwing themselves down on canvas, which they had spread out for beds, were soon fast asleep. The lookout woke another man to relieve him a few hours later.

The noise aroused George.

"How is the weather?" he inquired of the lookout.

"It has stopped raining and blowing," was the reply. "The sky is clear, and the moon is shining."

"Everything quiet?"

"Yes, sir."

George rose and went out.

The rays of the moon fell upon the wild coast scenery, giving to it a fantastic appearance.

The young captain's first visit was to the beach.

He found the wreck in a worse position than before, for she was now completely on her beam-ends.

He left the beach and strolled along the moonlighted coast, climbing from rock to rock.

Having at length gained a lofty height, he looked seaward.

But he could detect no sign of a sail in that direction, although a slight mist in the distance might have hidden one.

Chancing, however, to turn his gaze along the coast, he suddenly started with a cry of surprise.

Rising above the rocks, which evidently bordered

a bay, were the tops of a vessel's masts—evidently those of a schooner—just visible in the dim light.

George descended the heights and made his way toward the spot where he had seen the masts.

At length he found himself amongst a mass of rocks, through an opening of which he was able to obtain a view of the craft whose masts he had seen.

The moonlight falling full upon the craft, which lay in the middle of the bay, about forty fathoms from the shore, revealed it sufficiently to enable him to recognize his own vessel, the *Columbia*.

The sight made his heart bound.

There was his own beautiful schooner at anchor within full view of her owner, now cast away with his crew on this wild shore!

How many men were there aboard of her? Could he not capture her this very night from her present crew?

Those were the two questions that passed swiftly through his mind.

He resolved to fuse no time.

Although there were but two muskets in the possession of his party, yet, by surprising the colony men, he might succeed in the capture.

A quick dash—a sudden attack with crowbars, axes and handspikes, might accomplish much.

He was on the point of turning to retrace his steps to the house in which his men were collected, when he fancied he heard the sound of voices.

He had, in fact, but just time to conceal himself behind a protruding rock, when a party of twelve men in a boat shot round an angle of the rugged mass.

As they had not evidently used their oars, but had simply drawn the craft alongshore by catching at the rugged spurs, George was not surprised that he had known nothing of their approach until they were so close to him.

They stopped the boat within two feet of his hiding-place. In fact, he could have touched one of them by simply stretching out his hand.

The person nearest to him was his enemy, Will Brunt.

He was armed, like his companions, with a long knife and pistol, thrust into a belt about his waist.

"You are sure of what you reported?" inquired a stout individual amongst the gang, evidently one detached from the schooner *Briton* to take command of the *Columbia*. "We must make sure of that ere we go a step further. As it is, I think we run a great risk in leaving the craft with only two men—the cook and the steward—aboard."

"You run no risk whatever," said Brunt. "Those cursed Yankees as yet have no suspicion of our being here. As to my having seen them, I don't think I can doubt my own eyes."

"But you say it was nearly dark when you saw them. Might you not have been deceived? Might they not have been a gang of Irish smugglers?"

"No, no! You can trust my eyes anywhere."

"I don't see how they could have escaped from that rocky cave where we left them blocked in by the fallen rock."

"They probably contrived to signal some craft and were taken out. Be that as it may, one thing is sure—they are ashore here, and unless we dispose of them to a man, they will make trouble for us yet."

"I am sorry we have lost sight of Captain Merle. Were he here, he might co-operate with us."

"What! are you afraid of a mere handful of Yankees—unarmed as they are, too?"

"I am not afraid, of course; but the more men we had with us, the easier would be our work. I would like to speak to the captain before commencing this business."

"Of course he would make no objection. Have not we of the coast gang sworn to a man to do all the harm we can to those Yankee fishers—to drive them entirely from our fishing-grounds?"

"Yes, but I am afraid we shall never succeed in doing that."

"Well, we will go as far as we can, at any rate."

"I propose that we put it off for a few hours. When we left the schooner, there was a sail just coming to view out of the strip of fog seaward. That sail may prove to be the *Briton*."

"I am for making the attack at once. The Yankees may leave that house and escape now while we are waiting."

"They cannot escape us, for, as you said, the vessel in which they came is aground."

"True, but they may travel off somewhere, and perhaps fall in with some of the Irish smugglers, who would join them against us."

"Well, at any rate, we will wait until we can make out what craft that is approaching. I propose that we pull out toward it to ascertain if it be the *Briton*."

Will Brunt opposed this, but the leader of the party would not be turned from his purpose.

He gave the order, and the boat was pulled out of the bay toward the strange craft, which was now dimly visible in the distance.

Emerging from his hiding-place, George perceived that this craft was not a league from the bay.

He would not, therefore, have time to go back for his men to bring them in the boats to board and capture the *Columbia* before the return of the party that had just left him.

Nevertheless, he longed earnestly to again obtain possession of his schooner.

There she lay, temptingly, before him out in the bay, her sails unfurled to dry after the rain, her neat rigging and masts shining in the silvery light of the moon.

Brunt had said there were only two men—the cook and the steward—left aboard of her. George at once inferred that these people would not keep a very good lookout.

Could he not therefore swim out to the vessel and get aboard of her?

But what then?

The young captain did not stop long to ponder over this question.

Once on the deck of his own craft, some plan for further proceedings might suggest itself.

In this he acted with a certain impetuosity and reckless daring peculiar to his nature.

"I will board her," he said to himself, "and trust to chance."

He took off his cap and stuffed it into his pocket. Then he divested himself of his shoes and jacket, which he tied to his waist.

"Now for it," he said.

"What, you ain't a-going all by yourself, be ye? Come now, darn me if I think that's prudent!"

George turned in surprise, to behold the long, sinewy form of Old Tom rising from a hollow in the rocks, not four feet from him.

"You here?" he cried.

"I rather calculate it is me, my boy, if I know myself."

"How did you come here? How long have you been here?"

"Long enough, I guess, to take in everything that's been going on. Oh! darn those Britishers! I heard every word they said, and it made my blood bile to hear 'em. Just as if that craft was their own, and all they had to do was to sail about in her and parsecoutem."

"Well, Tom, I am really glad you have come. That craft is certainly as good as ours, now!"

"It ain't ours yet, my boy. Don't be too sure, lest you git disappointed. Life is full of disappintments, and we must be prepared, but I'll be skinned for a codfish if I don't make some tall kicks again any sich obstacles as may lump against us under present saroumstances."

"I see you have one of the muskets with you," said George, looking at the weapon which Tom carried.

"Ay, ay, my boy. I saw you when you got up and stole out of the house, and I just made up my mind that I would follow you, and be on hand to help you if you got into trouble. That was why I brought this musket, which is loaded."

"How are you to keep it dry when we swim for the schooner?"

"A codfish, my boy, ain't the only thing which has a skin to it," said Tom, grinning. "This musket is of British manufacture, and I'm blasted if it ain't a good one. The moment it fell into my hands I determined to keep it in good order, so I made a case for it of tarred canvas."

As he spoke he pulled the case from his pocket, and proceeded to draw it over the piece.

Then, divesting himself of cap, jacket and shoes, he secured them to his person, after which he slung the musket over his back by the strap attached to it.

"Now, then, I'm ready, and the sooner we start the better. I guess it won't take us long to reach the schooner, seeing as we are both good swimmers."

The twain took to the water and struck out.

They made good progress, and were soon within a few fathoms of the schooner's bow.

As they had supposed was the case, the cook and the steward were keeping no lookout at all.

The last was, they were stretched out upon the deck, buried in a profound slumber, each with a loaded musket by his side.

It chanced, however, that the steward about this time began to snore so loud that he awoke his companion, the cook.

The latter concluded that he would just take a look about him, to make sure that all was right, ere going at it to continue his slumber out of hearing of the sound of the steward's snoring.

First he walked to larboard and looked over the side, then to starboard, and then he just glanced over the bow.

His shadow, as he came, had been thrown over the rail, and George and Tom had both dived to escape observation.

The cook, however, heard the rippling sound they thus made, and he thought he would wait to see what "kind of a fish" that was which had caused it.

The two swimmers were obliged to come up to breathe.

They rose under the shadow of the bow, and both caught hold of the bob-tay.

The cook overlooked them at first, but his gaze gradually wandered nearer the bow, and, looking down, he encountered two pairs of eyes glaring up at him from the gloom. These eyes, however, almost instantly disappeared.

"They were human beings!" muttered the cook. "Them eyes wasn't the eyes of no fish!"

Not seeing them again, he concluded that his vision, disordered by his late sleep, had deceived him.

As he was not sure, however, he thought it was as well to go and get his musket and awaken the steward.

After another long, keen look at the bow, he turned, and was moving toward the prostrate steward, when a gaunt, sinewy form appeared directly before him, holding a musket pointed at his head.

"No noise, you darned rascal!" said Old Tom—for he it was—"or by the eternal Gin'ral Jackson you're a dead cat!"

The cook rubbed his eyes and stared, as if to assure himself he was not dreaming.

"Hilo!" he cried, "what does this mean? How did you come aboard?"

"I came up the fore-chains, if you want to know," said Old Tom, "and so did my friend. It was easy enough to climb up there, you'll allow."

"Your friend?" gasped the cook.

"Ay, ay; don't you see his head?"

And Tom jerked his elbow behind him.

Looking in that direction, the cook beheld George Holt, with the steward's musket in his hand, poking the sleeper with his foot to awaken him.

At length the steward opened his eyes. He stared in a bewildered manner at George.

"No noise," said the latter, "or I shall shoot you. "Jump up and lend a hand to hoist the foresail and mainsail."

"No, I'll be darned if I do!" answered the steward, springing to his feet.

"Do as I say, or I fire!" said George, pointing the musket at his head.

But the steward still hesitated.

The lock of the musket clicked as George put it at full cock.

All at once the steward, who stood near the rail, vaulted over into the sea.

The cook, ere Tom could prevent him, imitated his example, and both men struck out for the shore.

"Let them go," said George, as Tom leveled his musket at the bindmost swimmer. "It does not matter."

"If it wasn't for the noise, which would be heard by the Britishers in the boat, I'm darned if I wouldn't fire a shot just to scare 'em, if for nothing else."

"Well, Tom, we now have possession of our own craft again," said George. "But we will have to work hard to get her under way. Fortunately, we have a good breeze for it, and the tide is in our favor. We have only to round yonder point," he added, looking toward a lofty mass of rocks, about half a mile off, jutting into the sea, "to get into the same bay where the wreck is. Then all we have to do is to summon our people aboard."

"All these things will take time," said Old Tom. "I ain't sure of our craft yet," he added, looking keenly toward the receding boat containing the colony men, and then allowing his gaze to wander still further beyond toward the craft they were pulling for.

The boat was now about two miles off, looking like a black speck in the moonlight. The vessel she was heading for lay with her main yard aback, and the two men could perceive that she had three masts, and that she was quite a large ship.

"I had a night-glass aboard," said George; "and it is still here if those colony men have not taken it with them."

He bounded aft, entered the cabin, and was glad to find that the glass had not been disturbed—that it was hanging in its usual place.

He took it down, went on deck with it, and pointed it toward the ship.

"Well, my boy, what do you make her out?" inquired Old Tom, who saw the youth start.

"A sloop-of-war, with English colors at her mizzen, as sure as I'm alive," was the answer.

"Phew!" ejaculated Tom, in dismay. "Then I rather calculate we'll have to work some to keep our craft. Of course those colony chaps will report that this is their own craft, when they see us under way, and we may seriously expect a lively time of it."

"Ay, I expect we'll have some shot rattling about our heads," said George.

"We certainly will. All we can do won't help us, but I'll be darned to gracious if I don't make a 'streak' for it before we're overhauled or crippled."

"We may not be overhauled," said George. "If they fire, I shall hoist the American colors."

"Ay, ay, my boy, but that won't do any good. The colony men will pretend that their craft has been captured by smugglers, or something of that sort, and they will persuade the sloop-of-war's people that the hoisting of the American flag is only a trick."

"I believe you are right, Old Tom. Well, one thing is certain, there is no suspicion yet of our being aboard."

Tom took the glass from George and looked through it.

"Hello! Darnation!" he cried. "Now, I rather calculate that's the same British sloop-of-war which came to attack the Irish smugglers further down the coast!"

"Worse and worse," said George. "However, we must lose no time. You and I must try to get up the foresail and mainsail as well as we can."

The two at once went to work, but they found it almost impossible to raise the booms more than a few feet.

This, however, would enable them to make some headway, and they now proceeded to slip the cable.

This was soon done, and, manning the helm, Old Tom headed the schooner out of the bay.

The wind and current interfered, and ere she was out of the bay, both Tom and his young companion were delighted to perceive that a mist, coming down from windward, was closing about the boat and the sloop-of-war.

"It it had only happened sooner!" said Tom, regretfully.

"Why?"

"Then the colony chaps would not even have known the *Columbia* was recaptured."

"I don't believe they know it yet," said George. "I don't think they could perceive anything at that distance."

"P'raps not, but we shall see! If the sloop-of-war should fire into us, I wish to gracious we had some kind of a gun aboard, if only a six-pounder, just for the satisfaction of firing at *her*, even if we didn't hit her!"

The partially hoisted sails were now rattling. But they helped the little craft along, nevertheless, and she was soon out of the bay.

Again Tom and his friend were obliged to work at the sails, for it was now necessary to haul the sheets further aft in order to round the point, so as to make for the other bay.

Half an hour later the point was passed, and the schooner now headed for the bay in which was the wreck.

Meanwhile, the lookout man near the house ashore had seen the vessel coming, and had thought he had recognized her as the *Columbia*.

Supposing that she contained the coast-gang crew, he at once aroused the inmates of the house.

"Where is Captain Holt?" inquired Coleman, as the men collected outside.

"I don't know," was the answer. "He went away several hours ago, and Tom went soon after. Neither of them has yet returned."

Coleman ran to the shore of the bay, to make sure that the vessel coming in was the *Columbia*.

Scarcely had he reached the beach when George sprang upon the knightheads of the schooner and waved his arms to him.

"Is that you, Coleman?" he shouted.

"Ay, ay, sir! How, in heaven's name, came you to bring this about? What does it mean?"

"It means that the *Columbia* is ours again. Bring half a dozen of the men aboard at once, to work the craft!"

Coleman summoned his men, who, on learning that George was in possession of their beloved craft again, rent the air with their cheers.

One of the boats was soon alongside with Coleman and six men.

George then made explanations, after which the vessel was headed a safe distance from the shore and was brought to.

"We have no time to lose," said the young captain. "Away you go, Coleman, and bring all our things aboard. Let the ladies come with the first cargo."

The officer obeyed.

When most of the articles which had been stowed in the house had been brought to the schooner, George concluded to leave the rest, which were not of much consequence.

Then, with all the party aboard, the craft was headed seaward. [To be continued.]

"The Young Hero of Cape Ann" was commenced in 670.

A VALIANT YOUNG CALF.

RECENTLY, near Waco, Texas, a small yearling calf was grazing by the roadside when it was approached by a mule and most viciously attacked. The calf offered no resistance at first and endeavored for some moments to escape, giving utterance to the most piteous cries during the time. The mule followed the poor thing up, kicking and biting it at every turn, until finally, in sheer desperation, the calf turned and butted the enemy squarely in the forehead. The mule staggered a moment and fell to the ground, and when the gentlemen who witnessed the singular occurrence rode up, they found it to be quite dead, while the calf, standing a few yards away, was apparently unhurt.

TAKING A DRINK TOGETHER.

A CITIZEN of Tallahassee recently went to Wakulla County, Fla., on a hunting expedition for a few weeks. Early in the morning this gentleman started out from camp to procure water from one of the many springs in that section, and, after proceeding a short distance, came to one located in a secluded spot, and surrounded by dense foliage. Pushing his way though the undergrowth, he reached the spring, and feeling thirsty, threw himself upon the ground and commenced drinking.

Suddenly he was startled by a rustling of the leaves and the snapping of twigs near by, and presently a huge bear made his appearance. Quietly raising his head, our friend, not daring to move, and not being armed, kept his position, and waited to see what turn affairs would take. His bearship slowly approached the water within three feet of our friend, and, after eying him for a few moments, proceeded to drink.

Our friend began to feel more easy on noticing the bear so good-natured, and, wishing to become better acquainted, reached out his hand and gently tapped him on the nose. The bear, not seeming to be in a quarrelsome mood, smiled his hand, looked at him for a moment, and then, wagging his stumpy tail, walked off.

THE MYSTIC THREE:

SHOWING WHAT HAPPENED TO THREE BOYS WHO BELIEVED ALL THEY READ.

By PIERCE CUTTING.

CHAPTER XVIII.

TREED.

"IF you keep on this way you may be hanged, Hackey," observed Gid, gravely.

"Be what?"

"Hanged, Hackey, my boy, hanged."

"That's so, Hack," commented Sim.

"Captain Snick, if you please, Mr. Pugsley."

"Oh, suffering mackerel! Just listen to him, Gid."

"I do, with sorrow."

"If he don't put on more lugs than a French dancing-master, I'll eat my thumb."

"I'll put in a lug under your ear if you're not more respectful to your superior."

"You'd better try it," retorted Sim, defiantly.

And he was about putting himself in an attitude of defense, when his eyes happened to fall upon Gid Goble.

Gid was in some respects of a rather phlegmatic temperament, and was also blessed with an excellent appetite.

Paying no attention to the dispute, he had placed the corn in the hot ashes, and as soon as it was roasted began devouring it.

It was this sight which had caused Sim to suspend so suddenly his warlike intentions, and made his blood run cold with horror.

Gid had already cleaned three ears, and was just beginning to gnaw the fourth when Sim spied him, and at once pounced upon the remaining ones.

Hackaliah followed suit, and for a few minutes the crunch, crunch of the boys' teeth was about the only sound that broke the stillness.

When the corn was all eaten and their appetites nearly, if not quite, satisfied, they settled down for a rest, and slept for about three hours.

Hackaliah was the first to wake, and soon roused the others.

Gid, who had once been over the road they were now on, recognized it as the one leading to West Harbor, a small village on Long Island Sound, and they determined to proceed thither.

They set off along the road in no very good spirits, for the loss of their money had placed them in a sort of a quandary as to their future movements.

"We've got to raise the wind somehow, mates," remarked Gid, oracularly, as they tramped along.

"Oh, that's easy enough," said Hackaliah, with an air of unconcern.

"How are you going to do it?" inquired Sim.

"Why, Gid can sell those old blunderbusses he's a-wearing in his belt. They ain't no good, and it makes me tired to see him carry them."

"Well, I shan't sell 'em," responded Gid, with determination. "You don't have to carry 'em, any way."

"I wouldn't be found dead with one of 'em about me."

"I suppose not, or any other way, if you could help it."

"Don't interrupt me, Mr. Goble! As I said before, you can sell those old pistols, and Sim can find somebody to buy that sheepskin he's lugging around; that'll give us a start, any way."

"Oh, I can, can I?" remarked Sim, with great indignation.

"Of course you can."

"And what are you going to dispose of, if I might inquire?"

"I haven't got anything that I wish to part with just at present."

"Oh, you haven't?"

"No, sir; not a thing."

"I'll tell you what you can do!" exclaimed Sim; "you can sell your books."

"Not if I know myself."

"He couldn't get anything for them, except for waste paper," said Gid.

"I'd get a darned sight more than you could for that trash you're toting around."

"Perhaps you would; yours is the heaviest, you know."

"Well, we'll have to do something, that's plain enough."

"Time enough to make up our minds about it when we get to West Harbor."

"Well, step out lively, then, if you expect to get there to-day."

And they plodded along for a mile or two more without speaking.

Then it was Gid who broke the silence.

"Say, ain't you fellows getting hungry?" he demanded.

"Awful."

"I could eat a stuffed alligator or a dried rattlesnake."

"Well, how are we going to get anything to eat?"

"Ask the captain," said Sim; "that's his department."

"You can have plenty of corn if you want it," replied Hackaliah, pointing to an extensive field on their right.

"I don't hanker after corn so much as I did," said Gid, "but it's a heap better than nothing."

"Let's stop and roast some, then."

And as he spoke, Sim started to climb the fence.

"Halt!" thundered Hackaliah, in his sternest manner.

"What's the matter with you?" demanded Sim.

"You just wait for orders, that's all."

"Oh, that's it, is it? Well, we're waiting."

"Gobie and Pugsley," continued the captain, with great dignity, "you may proceed to yonder field and procure a sufficient quantity of corn for our

supper, and be quick about it. I will await you here."

"Great lightning-bugs! what dictionary did you swallow to-day?"

"Never mind; we'll swallow some corn as soon as you get it."

"And what will you be doing in the meantime?"

"I will ignite the combustibles, sir."

"Well, hurry up about it, then; here's a lot of matches."

And Sim scaled the fence and disappeared with Gid among the tall, rustling stalks of the corn.

Hackaliah proceeded to kindle a fire, and then lay down by the side of it and dozed off to sleep.

He was suddenly awakened by a confusion of noises.

Springing to his feet, he looked in every direction to find out from what they proceeded. At first he could see nothing. Shouts and yells, and the loud barking of a dog, came to him from some distance down the road, but no one was visible.

Suddenly two figures, which Hackaliah easily recognized as those of his two comrades, bounded into the road, at a point about two hundred yards away, and came toward him on a dead run.

A minute later a huge dog leaped the fence and tore after them, growling savagely.

The animal was followed in the interval of another second by an irate-looking farmer, bearing in his hand a slender hickory pole, about ten feet long.

It was evident that the corn expedition had got into trouble.

The captain of the "Devastators" began to feel a little nervous.

On came pursued and pursuers, and as the fugitives neared him, Hackaliah noticed that Sim was enveloped from his neck to his heels in some strange garment, that fluttered wildly in the wind, and seemed to excite the dog to renewed fury.

As Sim and Gid dashed up to him, panting and almost breathless, the former shouted:

"Git up a tree, Hack, quicker'n lightnin', or that dog 'll chaw you into sausage-meat!"

Simultaneously the three devastators scrambled each into a tree, just as the dog rushed upon them.

They succeeded, by a desperate effort, in getting beyond his reach before he could seize them, although Sim left the tail of his queer-looking garment in the enraged brute's mouth.

The boys had not yet recovered breath enough to speak intelligently, when the farmer came up.

"Well, gosh all hucklebery," said the farmer, looking from one to the other of the trio, in utter astonishment; "if this ain't the queerest layout I ever did see! What on airth are you varmints, anyhow?"

The occupants of the trees made no reply.

"Come down this minute, you young sarpints, or I'll tan the hide off the lot of ye!"

"We're quite comfortable where we are, my good sir," responded Hackaliah; "and we couldn't think of putting you to the trouble of tanning us."

"This here is a pretty go," said the farmer, wrathfully. "Why, you impudent young toad, them two scamps wasn't satisfied with stealin' my corn, but they must go and pull my scarecrow to pieces, and steal my old granddad's swallow-tail coat that I used to make it with. That monkey-faced imp there has got it on this minute."

And he pointed to Sim, who was, in fact, arrayed in such fragments of that venerable garment as the fences and the dog had spared him.

"You ought to feel proud that I would condescend to put the old rag on," said Sim, who had now recovered his audacity.

"Feel proud! Old rag! Well, blame my cats if that ain't a good one. That air was granddad's weddin' suit, and he sot a heap of store by it. Are you goin' to come down, or shall I have to make ye?"

"We appreciate your kind invitation, but the fact is, we've got business here just now, old apple-sass."

"Waal, if this don't beat all! You're the queerest lot of tramps I ever did see. However, if you like it so well there, mebbe you won't mind stayin' there for a few hours. Here, Bose, watch 'em, sir."

The dog wagged his tail knowingly, and then giving a deep growl, posted himself beneath the central tree, that in which Hackaliah had taken refuge, and lay down as if for a long watch.

"Neow," continued the farmer, "I'll jest go and finish mendin' that fence, and then hitch up my old mare and go down to Tunkapank and git the constable. You'd better not let Bose git hold of you, I tell you."

"Thank you; we won't."

"By the time I git back mebbe you'll be willin' to come down quietly."

So saying, he walked off down the road and soon disappeared in the corn, leaving the devastators

A LESSON IN OUTLINE DRAWING.

perched aloft like so many monkeys, casting disgusted glances upon the watchful sentinel beneath, whose fiery eyes roved from one to another of the captives with unwearying vigilance.

CHAPTER XIX.

A STREAK OF LUCK.

"SO we're all up a tree at last," remarked Gid.

"Well, we are, just," observed Sim.

"This is a nice fix, and no mistake," said Hackaliah, disgustedly.

They had sat looking at one another and the dog in silence for fully fifteen minutes before they gained nerve enough to speak.

"But what I want to know," continued Hack, "is what in thunder you two galoots were up to that you had to raise this row on us?"

"What row?" said Sim.

"Why, to run foul of that old cabbage-eater, and get us pinned here like three sick crows."

"'Twasn't our fault," responded Sim defiantly.

"No, I s'pose not. Next thing you'll say it was mine, perhaps."

"Well, if you hadn't sent us after the corn we wouldn't have run across the farmer."

"Yes, and if the old man had never been born you wouldn't have met him, would you? Puggy, you're enough to make a dog sick."

"So it seems."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Well, you're sick, ain't you? You look so, that's a dead'sure thing."

"All right, Mr. Pugsley; just wait till I can get at you, that's all."

"Don't wait on my account, Mr. Snick. Come right along; no time like the present, you know. I'll wait in for you all the evening."

Hackaliah, it is needless to state, did not accept this kind invitation, having excellent reasons in the shape of about thirty-five pounds of bulldog for remaining where he was.

It was now almost dark, and the captives began to get very nervous as they momentarily anticipated the return of the farmer, and their probable arrest and incarceration in jail.

The dog remained at his post, and gave no indication of any intention to leave it.

"I say, messmates," broke in Gid Goble, after a long silence, "this sort of thing won't do, you know. We must find some way to get out of this scrape."

"How did you get into it?" demanded Hackaliah; "that's what I want to know."

"It was all Sim's fault. We had got the corn, and were coming back all right when he saw that miserable old scarecrow, and nothing would do him but going to look at it."

"Well, what happened then?"

"Why, Sim took a fancy to that old coat, that sweet-looking thing he's got on now, and pulled the scarecrow to pieces to get it."

"I should think any respectable monkey would be ashamed to be seen in such an antediluvian rag," said Hack.

"An African gorilla would scorn it," responded Gid; "but it just suits Puggy."

"Exactly the thing for his style of beauty."

"Fits him like a shirt on a bush."

"Or a bed-spread on a beanpole."

Sim listened to these disparaging remarks in dignified silence, satisfied to await his turn to get square.

"Well, did the farmer catch you then?" resumed Hackaliah.

"He came up just as Puggy was trying on his new coat. He put for us like a shot, and we traveled."

"I should just say you did. Electricity isn't a patch to you."

"Electricity never had that dog after it, and don't you forget it."

"Are you fellows done chinning?" inquired Sim, gravely.

"Hallos! it's woke up," exclaimed Hack, in affected surprise. "What can we have the pleasure of doing for you, Mr. Pugsley?"

"You can find some way for us to escape, for one thing."

"Why should I find it, any more than you?"

"You're the commander-in-chief, I believe."

"Well?"

"It's your duty to get us out of this fix."

"Oh, it is, hey, after you've got us into it?"

"Yes, sir, it is."

"Suppose I can't think of any plan?"

"If you were any good as captain you'd have had one long ago."

"Oh, I would, would I?"

"Cert."

"Perhaps you've got a plan, Mr. Pugsley?"

"Perhaps I have."

"Why don't you spit it out, then?"

"Oh, I ain't captain to-day."

"Then I s'pose we must wait till your day comes?"

"Shouldn't wonder."

"If you were, I suppose we'd be out of this in no time?"

"In about three shakes of a lamb's tail."

"Do you want to go to jail, Puggy?"

"Not particularly."

"Then out with your plan, if you've got any."

"You want me to help you out, do you?"

"Of course we do."

"Hurry up, Puggy, for gracious sake; if you have thought of any way, out with it," added Gid.

"You both admit that you can't help yourselves?"

"We do."

"Then," said Sim, assuming an air of great importance, "I suppose I'll have to help you."

"You've got a plan, then?"

"I just have."

"What is it."

"This."

And Puggy lowered his voice mysteriously, as though he had feared the presence of an unseen listener.

The other two awaited breathlessly the expected revelation, when Sim stopped suddenly with a loud "Hist!"

"What's the matter with you?" inquired Hackaliah, impatiently.

"Hush, I hear a noise."

"So do I. You're talking."

"There's something coming."

"Yes. A constable with a warrant."

All three listened intently for a few minutes, and sure enough, the sound of approaching wheels was borne to them faintly on the night-breeze.

"It's the farmer and the constable, sure," gasped Gid.

"We're in for it now, and no mistake," exclaimed Hack. "How about your plan, Puggy?"

"It's too late," replied Sim, doletully; "we'll have to surrender; there's no help for it."

The sound of wheels came nearer, and in a few moments a large wagon, drawn by two horses, rumbled slowly by.

It was one of the style used by that useful fraternity known as peddlers, and the driver, who was whistling merrily, did not even look in the direction where the trio sat, perched aloft like so many mast-headed midshipmen.

Trotting behind the wagon, however, was a large, black dog.

This animal, probably dreaming of the supper that awaited him when his day's journey was over, would probably have passed quietly enough, had not Bose taken it into his canine noddle to utter a savage growl.

The black dog stopped, wheeled, and trotted over at once to the spot where Bose was on guard.

The next moment the two dogs were rolling over and over on the ground, struggling savagely for the mastery.

Growling furiously, and uttering sharp howls of pain, the two brutes tore at one another.

In vain the driver of the wagon pulled up his horses and called in alternate tones of endearment and objurgation to his own dog.

That canine's blood was up, and he had it in his eye.

So had Bose.

The dogs, in their struggles, rolled away from the trees and out into the road, where they fought madly.

The teamster sprang from his wagon, armed with a heavy black-snake whip, and laid into the combatants with that weapon with all the strength he could command.

As he did so, the horses, terrified by the frantic howls of the two brutes, suddenly started on a dead run up the road.

The teamster hastened in pursuit, shouting frantically to stop them, leaving the two dogs still tearing one another to pieces.

At this moment our three heroes, who had watched the combat with the keenest delight, slid down their trees with the utmost alacrity, and as Sim afterward expressed it, "made the tallest kind of tracks across country."

For a long time they could still hear the howls of the battling dogs, the cries of the teamster and the furious hoof-strokes of the frightened horses, but at last all these sounds died away in the distance.

"Now, then," panted Sim, "is what I call solid luck."

"It was for us," gasped Gid; "but how about the peddler?"

"Well, he's found out two things he didn't know before, I guess."

"What are they?"

"Why, that his dog can fight and his horses run fast, of course."

CHAPTER XX.

A NEW ACQUAINTANCE.

AFTER a few minutes spent in recovering breath after their headlong run across the fields, the somewhat demoralized devastators began the consideration of what should be their next move.

"We'd better get back to the road, fellows," said Hackaliah, authoritatively, "or we'll get clean turned round, and walk right into Tunkapank, as like as not."

"But if we go back to the road we may fall in with the dogs," said Sim.

"And what then?"

"Nothing; only we'll get chawed up, sure."

"I don't think those dogs will leave much of themselves unchawed, let alone chaw anybody else."

"I don't hanker to trust 'em, any way."

"I see how it is, Gid," remarked Hack, with an air of pity; "poor Puggy's afraid."

"Who's afraid?"

"You are."

"Well, I ain't afraid of you, anyway."

"You'd better be."

"Oh, I had, had I?"

"Yes, sir, you had."

"Perhaps, Captain Snick, you will condescend to inform me what cause I have for fear?"

"Because you don't want to be chawed up."

"Well, who's going to chaw me up?"

"I'm liable to do that very thing."

"You don't say so?"

"Yes, sir. I'm worse than forty bulldogs when you get me roused."

"Takes a good deal to rouse you, don't it?"

"I won't take much more of your chin, you can bet on that."

"You'd both of you do better to stop your jaw and get out of this," interrupted Gid.

"I'm only waiting for the captain's orders," replied Sim, sarcastically.

"You won't have long to wait, then," said Hack, "for I order you to start along this minute."

A WACO WONDER.—A TRAILING CALF CONQUERS A VICIOUS MULE.—SEE PAGE 196.

TAKING A DRINK TOGETHER.—A GENTLEMAN AND A BEAR BATHEY THEIR THIRST AT THE SAME SPRING.—SEE PAGE 196.

Whatever Mr. Pugsley's inclinations were, he wisely restrained himself, and the three started off in what they thought must be a direction parallel to that of the road.

For about two hours they tramped along in silence, their journey only varied by the occasional incident of climbing a fence or by one or the other stumbling into some one of the numerous ditches that intersected their path.

At length, as they heard the bell of some distant steeple toll out the strokes of ten, they neared something that loomed up black and gigantic against the sky.

It proved to be a huge haystack, above which was a sort of thatched roof, supported on four tall posts, to protect it from the weather.

"I don't know what you intend to do, fellows," said Sim, as they paused behind the haystack; "and I don't much care, either. But I'm going to stop right here. I'm so tired that it makes me ache to think of it, and so hungry that my bones are all coming through my skin."

For once Sim's proposal called forth no adverse opinion from either Captain Snick or Gid Goble.

The fact was, that each had been wishing for an hour that one of the others would propose a rest.

They were all tired out, and the haystack would afford them a comfortable sleeping-place, at least.

Pulling down a quantity of hay from the stack, they made a rude shake-down, large enough to accommodate three, and piling some hay over them, were soon asleep.

It was about two hours after daybreak that Gid Goble, who had been dreaming of a desperate encounter with a pirate chief in the Indian Ocean, reached that point of his vision when the heartless miscreant ordered him to be thrown to the sharks.

Despite his prayers and entreaties, he was hurled into the sea.

The cold waters closed over him. He felt the teeth of some dreadful monster of the deep closing upon his leg, gave a scream of agony, and woke with a start to find himself sitting up in the hay.

Contronting him, and wonderingly, was a venerable donkey, which, in wandering about the field, had found the material for a breakfast invitingly spread before him, and began to devour it, with the result of giving Gid a nip in the leg and chewing up a large part of his pantaloons.

The donkey was evidently not a cannibal, for as soon as it saw that it had commenced to devour a human being it gave a bray of astonishment, while Gid cried:

"Well, shiver my centreboard if this ain't a nice kind of animal to let run loose."

"He-haw!" brayed the donkey.

"Here, I say, you, Hack, Sim! wake up, you lazy, snoozing gumps. Do you want to be devoured alive?"

As Gid enforced his exclamations with several vigorous punches in the ribs of the sleepers, they quickly responded to his call, and crawled out from among the hay.

"What's the matter with you?" demanded Hack. "Are you trying to raise the neighborhood, hollering that way?"

"Matter!" said Gid, indignantly; "look at that."

And he stretched out one leg, from which nearly every vestige of covering, except a few tattered remnants of cloth, had vanished, and then pointed to the jackass, which was still calmly devouring the hay.

"Haw, haw, haw!" laughed Hack, in great delight; "what's happened to your pants?"

"You think it's something to laugh at, do you?"

"It's enough to make a dog laugh. But what did it?"

"That confounded brute there. And if I hadn't waked up just when I did, he'd have swallowed me entirely; see here."

And he pointed to the imprints of the donkey's teeth on his leg.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Sim; "why, he must be a cannibal."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Oh, nothing; it looks like it, that's all."

"It would have looked more like it if he had begun with you."

"I guess you're not hurt much."

"I only wish he'd gone for you, that's all," retorted Gid.

"He must have been very hungry not to choose better, anyhow, I'm thinking."

"If he was half so hungry as I am, I don't wonder at his going for the first he got hold of," said Sim.

"How is your breakfast-box feeling itself, Gid?"

"It craves for prey."

"And you pray for it, I suppose?"

"I'd pay mighty high for it if I had the sugar."

"I believe I could eat the jackass," observed Hack.

"Darned if that ain't a good idea, Hack," said Sim. "Maybe we can get a breakfast out of him."

"You haven't the heart to kill a relation, have you?"

"Ease up with your cheap wit, now, won't you?"

"But how are you going to make breakfast off a donkey without killing him? Eat him alive?"

"Not much. I'm going to take him to the first farmhouse, and tell 'em we found him loose; then, perhaps, they'd give us a breakfast."

"A breakfast of cowhide, I guess," observed Gid.

"Well, I don't want any persimmons in mine," said Hack; "besides, that donkey ain't worth fifteen cents. He's just been turned out to die. Only look at him!"

In fact, the appearance of the animal was not such as would lead any one to suppose that a reward would be given for his recovery.

He was shaggy, unkempt, and fairly grizzled with age; his rough hide was ornamented here and there with thistle-burrs; his tail was about as bare of hair as that of a rat; and his solitary eye—for he had but one—was bent upon them with an expression of patient resignation, which would have touched the heart of a turnip.

But the special feature of this remarkable quadruped was his ears.

They seemed about three times too large for a due proportion to his body, and while one of them towered aloft like a church spire, the other lopped over until it almost touched the cheek.

"He's a sweet specimen, now, isn't he?" continued Hack; "and we'd look nice toting him round the country for a reward."

"Yes," said Gid, "he wouldn't be good for anything, unless it was for a curiosity."

"He wouldn't be much of a curiosity if you fellows were around," said Sim, who was not pleased with the manner in which his proposition had been received.

"Wouldn't he?"

"No, he wouldn't."

"Why not?"

"Because there'd be so many of you that you'd be no curiosity at all."

"So many of what?"

"Jackasses, of course."

"You're very smart this morning, Mr. Pugsley."

"Thank you, Mr. Snick; "sorry I can't return the compliment."

"Don't trouble yourself; I'll do very well without."

"Come," said Gid, impatiently, "let's make another start; we'll never get anywhere at this rate."

"I believe I'm captain to-day," responded Sim Pugsley. "Hackaliah, catch that jackass."

"What for?"

"Because I order you."

"What am I going to catch him with?"

"You can make a halter out of that leather strap and slip it over his head."

"Wait a minute, then, and you'll have an easy job, I'll engage."

And bidding Gid follow him, Sim disappeared in a field off the road.

They soon came back, bearing a couple of fine heads of cabbage and some carrots and turnips.

These they tied together with stout twine into a species of vegetable nosegay, which they suspended over a long pole.

Carrying this pole on their shoulders, with the vegetables close to the jackass's nose, they resumed their march.

The donkey never looked at the grass now.

Devouring the succulent dainties on the pole as he went, he traveled along like a lamb to the slaughter.

Out of humor and tired as he was, Hack could not help looking at Sim and saying, admiringly:

"Great head! Great head, I swanny!"

CHAPTER XXI.

MANUFACTURING A ZEBRA.

TRAVELING in this order, it was scarcely two hours before they came in sight of West Harbor, and at the same time caught a glimpse of the broad expanse of Long Island Sound.

To the left of the road was a wood of considerable length, and a narrow cart-track led away into its depths.

Into this path Sim led the way, stepping off as confidently as if he knew every inch of its windings.

"What are you going in here for?" demanded Hack.

"Come along and you'll find out," was the only response.

After penetrating the wood for about a hundred yards Sim stopped at a point where the undergrowth had been cut away, leaving a small opening among the trees.

"This will do, I guess," he observed, critically.

"Do for what?"

THE MYSTIC THREE.—"HE LIFTED HIS HEELS; THEN THERE WAS A CRASH, A HOWL OF PAIN, AND MR. M'BATTERS AND THE DOOR OF THE STABLE SIMULTANEOUSLY DISAPPEARED."—SEE PAGE 196.

This project was carried out without difficulty, as the donkey was too busily engaged in gorging himself with hay to make any resistance to his capture.

"Well," inquired Hack, as soon as the jackass was secured, "what next?"

"Lead the jackass."

"Look here, Sim Pugsley, if you suppose I'm going round the country lugging this bill of bones after me, you're mistaken, that's all. I don't see the use of it."

"It ain't necessary for you to see the use, as long as I do; I'm boss of this caravan."

"Why don't you let Gid lead him? He seems to have a fondness for Gid."

"That's just the trouble. He's entirely too fond of Gid, and I don't dare to trust them together."

"Why not?"

"The old cannibal might finish his breakfast."

"That's so. Gid wouldn't be safe, and it would be a pity to lose him."

"Wouldn't it, though?"

"Of course it would, so come along, you miserable, lop-eared, old traveling boneyard. Look lively, now."

A few minutes' walk brought our travelers back to the road, and pulling down a section of the fence, Hackaliah dragged his unwilling charge through it, growling to himself at everything in general and jackasses in particular.

It did not improve matters that the donkey developed a tendency to devour every blade of grass they passed as they went along.

In point of fact, poor Hack had to tow him along very much as a tugboat tows a ship up the harbor.

At last he gave in completely, and stopped short.

"Its no use talking," he said.

"Then, why do you talk?" inquired Sim, sarcastically.

"Because I've got to say something."

"Why don't you say it, then?"

"I'm trying to."

"Does it make you very tired?"

"No, but this job does. If I go half a mile further this way, my arms will be pulled out. I don't mind leading a jackass, but I do object to dragging one like a wagon."

"For a place for you to make yourself comfortable in."

"I'd like to know how I'm to make myself comfortable without anything to eat."

"You'll soon have it."

"How? What are you going to do?—eat the jackass?"

"No; Gid and I are going into the village to get some grub."

"Indeed?"

"Yes, indeed."

"And are you aware that grub costs money, my son?"

"I am, dear grandmother, I am."

"What are you going to get it with, then?"

"With money."

"But you haven't got a cent."

"Haven't I? What do you call that?"

And Gid exhibited a small purse of rough leather, and, opening it, displayed five or six dollars in silver.

"Great watermelons!" exclaimed Hack and Gid, simultaneously. "Where did you get that?"

"Found it."

"But we haven't passed anybody drunk or asleep?"

"Oh, I just picked it up a piece back on the road."

"Well, I swear! I didn't see it."

"I know you didn't. You fellows never see anything."

"We'll never see that grub you've been making so much noise about, it seems."

"Be not impatient, gentle youth. Gideon, let us be gone upon our mission of mercy."

"And what am I to do while you are gone?"

"Stay right here and take care of the zebra."

"The what?"

"The zebra. That noble animal there."

"Sim Pugsley, are you crazy?"

"Not much."

"Then what do you mean by calling that wretched moke a zebra?"

"Well, if he ain't a zebra now, he will be pretty soon, that's all. Come, Gid, let's be off."

They reached the town by a few minute's sharp walking, and near the single wharf that jutted out into the little harbor found a small store with a sign bearing in dingy letters the words "Groceries and Shop-stores."

They bought a good supply of crackers and cheese, some smoked herrings, and several cans of preserved meat.

"We must hurry right back," remarked Gid, as they left the store. "Poor Hack must be nearly starved."

"We've got something else to do first," replied Sim. "I must find a paint-store."

"What do you want of a paint-store?"

"To buy paint, of course."

"Are you going to set up as an artist?"

"Yes. I think of becoming an animal painter."

"And paint jackasses?"

"You've hit it."

"Well, splice my topping lift, Pugsy, if you ain't a genius."

"I knew that long ago."

"Well, I didn't."

"It's all right, as long as you know it now."

"There's a paint-shop across the way."

"So there is. Here, you take the grub and start along, and I'll get what I want."

"All right."

And Gid took the road for the spot where they had left Hackaliah, and made such good time that he had not eaten up more than a quarter of the crackers-and-cheese before he got there.

"Thank goodness, you've got back at last," said Hackaliah, as Gid deposited his load. "Where's Sim?"

"He's coming."

"With more grub?"

"No; ain't there enough here?"

"Don't seem to be much. Have you been eating any?"

"Oh, I just took a bite as I came along."

"Your bites are like the Irishman's one drink, I guess."

"What was that like?" questioned Gid.

"It was the whole bottle."

"Oh, there's plenty left for all of us."

"It's lucky you didn't have far to bring it, or there would not have been," responded Hack, with his mouth full.

Gid made no reply, being too busy opening one of the meat-cans.

The meal was in full progress when Mr. Pugsley made his appearance, loaded down with bundles.

"What on earth are you up to, Sim?" demanded Hackaliah; "are you going to set up a store?"

"Wait till I get something to eat and I'll tell you. And while you're waiting, you may as well open those bundles."

Hack and Gid proceeded to do so with much alacrity.

"Well," cried Hack, when the operation was completed, "I'll be blowed!"

"You shouldn't say 'I'll be blowed,' Mr. Snick," observed Sim; "it isn't grammatical. 'I'll be blown' is the proper phrase."

"Look here," Gid went on, without noticing the interruption; "he has bought the slitheedest lot of trash you ever saw."

"What's the matter with it?" demanded Sim.

"Why, you've got three cans of prepared paint, and two brushes, and two pairs of overalls, and darn me if here ain't a piece of cotton cloth, and needles and thread, and a ball of twine."

"Is that all?"

"No. What's that in the roll, Gid?"

"A big piece of cardboard," answered Gid.

"Sakes alive! He's going to write visiting-cards!"

"It looks like it, don't it?"

"He's as crazy as a bedbug!" cried Hack.

"I believe he is, I swanny."

"Squandering all that money for such foolishness, when we'll be out of grub by to-morrow noon. Who ever heard the like?"

"You think it's fool shness, do you?" asked Sim.

"Yes, I do."

"And perhaps that is your opinion, too, Mr. Goble?"

"Maybe it is."

"Well, that foolishness will bring you in more money than you ever saw."

"I'd sooner see it than hear tell of it."

"You'll do both before to-morrow night."

"Is our dreams, I guess?"

"Only wait and see. Come, Gid, we must go to work."

"To work at what?"

"You may assist and find out, Mr. Snick, unless you're too high-toned."

"I'm willing to help, of course, but why can't you tell a fellow what you are going to do, and put him out of his misery?"

"You'll find out as you go along."

And without more words, Sim proceeded to open his cans of paint, which was of the patent ready-mixed variety.

"What under the sun are you going to do now?" queried Hack.

"I'm going to decorate that beautiful animal you've been taking such good care of all day."

"Decorate him?"

"Yes, sir, that's what I said."

"Do you mean that you are going to paint him?"

"Exactly."

"What, with red, white and black paint?"

"With those identical colors."

"And what do you expect to make of him?"

"He'll be the finest-looking zebra you ever saw, in a little while."

"Nobody ever heard of a red-and-white zebra."

"Didn't they?"

"No, sir, never."

"Well, they will, then, and pretty soon, too."

And he began to stripe the unhappy jackass with broad bands of alternate red and white.

Hack gazed at him in speechless admiration for a few minutes until he began to hanker after a share of the job, and said:

"Didn't you say we could help you?"

"So you can."

"Tell us how?"

"Measure off about a nine yards of that cloth."

"What'll I measure it with?"

"You might do it with your ears."

"I suppose so, or with one of your feet."

"Yes, or you might take the size of Gid's mouth, when he's got it stretched for a chunk of bread, as far as that goes. Can't you guess pretty nearly how much a yard is?"

"I suppose I can."

"Well, if you can do that it's easy enough to keep folding it over until you get nine yards, isn't it?"

"That's so; I never thought of that."

"What next?" asked Hackaliah, when the task was completed.

"Cut it into three pieces of the same length."

"It's done," said Hack, a moment later. "What shall we do now?"

"Take needles and thread and sew the strips together."

"What's the use of cutting it apart and then having to sew it together again?"

"Join it together at the sides, stupid, so as to make one wide strip."

"All right," said Hack; "I understand now."

"It's a wonder."

Making no reply to this last remark of Sim, Hackaliah and Gid set to work, and, although they were rather clumsy, it did not take long to finish it.

By the time they were done Sim had also completed his work, and stood looking admiringly at the jackass.

That animal certainly presented a most remarkable appearance.

He was striped in red and white from the tips of his ears to the end of his tail, while his legs were encircled by alternate rings of the same colors, till he looked like an animated barber-pole.

Down his back was a single wide stripe of black, which, as Sim remarked, "set him off amazingly."

"It sort of gives relief to the other colors," added Gid.

"Well, he is a beauty, and no mistake," said Hack.

"What do you intend to do with this sheet?"

"That's to cover him with. There wouldn't be much use of trying to exhibit him if everybody could see him for nothing."

"That's so."

The sheet, with some cutting and fitting, was soon made to cover the animal completely, with the exception of his head and legs.

A sort of rude hood was made to fit the former, and by cutting the legs off the overalls the zebra's hether extremities were also covered.

When all was done no part of the animal was visible except his hoofs, the tip of his nose, and his one upright ear, which protruded in all its red and white splendor from a hole in the top of the hood.

Fortunately for them, the victim of their labors was so gorged with food that he was too lazy to kick, and even when all three indulged in a war-dance as they thought of the prospective profits of their novel speculation, he made no remarks.

"Come, Gid," said Sim, picking up the cardboard and spreading it out on the flat stone "here's a job for you."

"What is it?"

"You used to be good at lettering."

"Well, I am, yet."

"I thought so. Just take this small brush and put down what I tell you."

"Go ahead; I'm ready."

"Begin at the top—in big letters, mind."

"All right."

"Wonderful and Unrivaled Exhibition."

"I've got that," said Gid, after working industriously for a few minutes.

"The marvelous and hitherto untamable —!"

"Yes."

"Great Australian Zebra."

"Why, Sim," broke in Hack, "there ain't any zebras in Australia."

"Well, who said there was?"

"You are just going to."

"Not at all. I only call this one the great Australian Zebra."

"Well, it ain't right."

"He isn't an African zebra, is he?"

"I should think not."

"Then we can call him what we like."

"But the people will know better."

"They will, will they?"

"To be sure they will."

"Did you ever see a map of Australia?"

"Of course I have."

"Then you know that the large-t part of the island is marked unexplored?"

"Yes."

"Well, that's the part this zebra comes from. Now shut up and let Gid finish."

"I'm as dumb as a drone with a hole in it."

"Go on, Gid," continued Sim; "on exhibition for three days only. Admission only ten cents."

Gid worked away so industriously that in a short time the placard was finished.

He had touched it up with red paint, and it presented a very showy appearance.

Tired out with their labors, the three, after another raid on the provisions, lay down together under the trees and slept as well as if in a four-poster, while the zebra, leaned against a tree and wondered what it all meant, till he, too, dropped into slumber.

CHAPTER XXII.

NATURAL HISTORY AT A DISCOUNT.

IT was very early in the morning when Sim woke up his companions and started alone for the town, leaving Hackaliah in charge of the zebra, while Gid went foraging after cabbages and turnips enough to feed that valuable animal.

When Sim reached the village, he, with some difficulty, found a man who owned a small, unused stable, which Sim declared would be just the thing.

"So you're one of them play-actin' people; air you?" said the owner of the stable.

"How do you know I am?"

"Oh! I know. You can't fool your Uncle Scrogg with them clothes on."

"I am an exhibitor, sir."

"An alligator?"

"No, sir: an exhibitor."

"An exhibitor of what?"

"Of the most beautiful yet wonderful animal ever beheld by mortal man."

"An' ye want tew show him here, eh?"

"I propose to afford to the people of your charming village an opportunity such as they may never have again. This is the only animal of the kind known to exist, and is the marvel of the civilized world."

"An' yew want ter hire my stable?"

"I do."

"Waal, how much kin ye bid for it?"

"I will give to yourself and family free passes to witness this beautiful and instructive exhibition."

"Dew tell!"

"And I will pay you the munificent sum of one dollar per day for the accommodation."

"It's a bargain, young man. Don't say another word. It's a bargain. But I say. You're a great one to talk, ain't you?"

"I have been told so."

"Waal, whoever told you so didn't make no mistake. How soon do you mean to open the show?"

"In an hour's time. The caravan is already on the way."

"I'll let everybody know you're comin', then. There ain't nobody seen a show here this six years."

"They will miss the greatest chance of their lives if they don't see this one."

"I reckon they'll all come if you'll take 'em in."

"Only let them come and I'll take them in."

"Waal, that's real kind of yew, now."

"Ain't it, though?"

And Sim hastened away.

Making a timsmith's, he purchased a tin-horn about a yard long, and in about half an hour the caravan made its triumphal entry into West Harbor.

Mr. Scrogge had spread abroad the news of their coming, and as a consequence the entire population of the village had turned out to greet them.

The procession entered the hamlet in the following order:

First came Sim, walking proudly, as became the exhibitor of the only Great Australian Zebra in the world.

As he advanced he performed various beautiful flourishes on the tin-horn, besides making futile efforts to imitate the bugle calls which he had once heard at a militia training.

It is true that one wretched boy, with no music in his soul, had the temerity to cry, "Fi-h! porgees on'y five cents a pound."

But Sim cast such a withering glance upon him that the unhappy youth ran home and hid himself in the woodshed, howling dismally.

Next in order came Gid Goble, bearing the gaudy placard attached to a pole.

The graceful form of Hackaliah Snick brought up the rear, leading the wonderful animal, upon which all eyes were cast.

The excitement of the bystanders was intense.

Never before had they seen anything so awe-inspiring, and the completely shrouded form of the patent zebra stimulated their curiosity to the utmost.

The crowd attended them to the very door of the stable, and even after the door had closed upon the invisible animal still lingered.

They were still there when Sim emerged from the building, and took the early but conspicuous position over the door, and mounting a soap-box which he had procured for the purpose, began his oration in the following words:

"Now, ladies and gentlemen, the exhibition is open. Walk up, and for the trifle of a dime view the most beautiful and wonderful animal of this or any other age, the marvel of the nineteenth century, the great Australian Zebra, when in his native state the most ferocious and untamable animal in the known world. The specimen we are about to exhibit to you was captured in the wilds of Western Australia by twenty-three intrepid hunters, after a perilous chase of forty-seven days. The peculiarities of this surprising animal are almost beyond belief. When pursued in the deep fastnesses of his native forests by his infuriated enemies he calmly hides himself behind his own ears, and placidly gazes upon his baffled pursuers."

Varying this with occasional blasts upon his horn, Sim managed to create a racket that kept every one in the village in a state of excitement.

The effect was soon patent.

Gid was kept busy at the door, taking in the dimes as fast as he could handle them, while within the building Hackaliah explained the habits and nature of the animal as if he were a professor of natural history.

Everything was going on swimmingly, and a rich harvest seemed assured.

All through the day and evening the rush continued, and when the show closed for the night the exhibitors were jubilant.

"Waal, you've made out right peert," observed Mr. Scrogge, that evening, when, by his invitation, the Mystic Three went home with him to supper.

"We can't complain," said Sim, with a lofty air.

"I should think not; but you'll do much better to-morrow."

"How so?"

"Because we have a kind of a weekly market here to-morrow, and all the farmers up back will come down. They gin'rally bring their women and children along, and you'll catch the whole caboodle, sure pop!"

"Glad to hear it," replied Sim; "and now I guess we'd better go to bed."

"I can give you beds here," said Mr. Scrogge.

"Much obliged; but we can't leave the zebra; he might break loose in the night and destroy half the village."

"I want to know, now!"

"Oh, he's a terror, he is. So you see we don't dare leave him alone."

"That's so. I suppose it wouldn't be safe. Waal, good-night, then."

"Good-night."

The next morning our heroes were up bright and early, and by nine o'clock had opened the show.

The crowd was even larger than the previous day, and Gid said:

"I'm a-getting so loaded with silver that I can scarcely walk."

"Well, you don't have to walk, do you?" replied Sim. "If you had to stand up here and bawl all day, you'd have something to growl at."

"Yes," said Hackaliah, "or if you had to talk all day, explaining all about this confounded brute, and be feeding him about ten times an hour, you might look like a hoss; but as long as you've got nothing to do but sit there and scoop in the money, you've got a mighty easy time of it."

Notwithstanding their growling, however, the three were all very well satisfied.

It was about eight o'clock in the evening, and the crowd in the stable was quite large, when a stumpy-built, carroty-headed, south-nosed Irishman approached the entrance.

"And how much might yez be askin' to see the baste?" he inquired.

"We might be asking a dollar," replied Gid Goble, "but on account of your misfortune we'll call it only ten cents."

"My misfortune, is it? And phat do yez mane by that, ye young spalpeen?"

"Why, your brick-top, you know. It's a pity, but I suppose it can't be helped."

"Is it me hair yez mane?" said the Irishman, indignantly.

"Yes, that gingerbread colored top-knot of yours."

"Bad luck to yez for a young sculpin. But niver mind; here's a dime. I'll take a look at the baste, anyway."

And the irate Hibernian passed in.

He pushed through the crowd until he stood in the very front, and gazed upon the animal with eyes like saucers.

"Howly Agatha!" he muttered, "an' is that a zebry?"

"That, my friend," replied Hackaliah, waving his hand with an instructive air—"that is the great, wonderful and only Australian zebra. He belongs to the species of mammalia, genus quadrumana, is gramnivorous and of a most ferocious and untamable disposition."

"Be gobs, but he's the quare baste intirely. Sure an' me name's not Paddy McBatters if iver I saw the loike."

"You certainly never did, Mr. McBatters, for no other example of this species has ever been exhibited."

"How could is be, sor?" queried Mr. McBatters.

"Seventy-three last June, sir, and likely to live to be a hundred."

"Bedad, he looks loike it," rejoined Mr. McBatters. "Barin' the color, he's for all the world loike my ould jackass, Teddy, that some rapscallin or other stole the other day."

"That was a misfortune, Mr. McBatters."

"Begorra, it'll be a worse misfortune for the thafe of the world that stole him if I once get my two eyes on him."

Hackaliah began to feel uncomfortable.

Mr. McBatters seemed to possess a wonderful amount of curiosity.

He walked round and round the animal, and viewed him from every point.

At last an idea seemed to strike him.

He stepped to one side and whistled in a peculiar manner.

The effect was magical.

The zebra gave vent to a wild bray, and made an effort to break the halter by which it was tied to a post.

"By the howly poker," shouted Mr. McBatters, throwing his hat in the air, "I thought as much. It's my jackass, ould Teddy, painted up, and no zebry at all, at all. Hurroo! let me at the thaving villains!"

And he made a rush at Hackaliah.

That agile young man dodged him and made a break for the door.

Gid took the alarm, and both darted out together.

But Mr. McBatters was at their heels.

Upsetting three or four people in his haste, he rushed after them, and would probably have seized them before they could get out, had not an incident happened most favorable for our hero.

As Mr. McBatters darted toward the door, he approached too nearly to the business end of poor Teddy.

That long-suffering quadruped had reached the limit of his endurance.

He lifted his heels, there was a crash, a howl of pain, and Mr. McBatters and the door of the stable simultaneously disappeared.

Meanwhile, the other spectators, but dimly understanding what was going on, became alarmed.

Some one raised the cry that the zebra was loose.

A panic took place at once.

The entire crowd burst out of the stable, throwing down and trampling on one another in their eagerness to escape.

Those who first reached the open air saw Mr. McBatters pursuing three flying figures, and making the air ring with wild howls of rage.

Such of the spectators as were not too frightened to follow him joined in the pursuit, and thus it happened that the late exhibitors of the "Great Australian Zebra" rushed madly down the village street, with the infuriated McBatters and half the village at their heels.

[To be continued.]

"The Mystic Three" was commenced in No. 677.

TOPSY-TURVY;

Or,

The Boy Explorer,

AND

THE WORLD TURNED INSIDE OUT.

(Continued from page 182.)

CHAPTER XXIX.

AFTER hearing him through attentively Doctor Harrington commenced his story:

"I was at that time in New York—not this New York," he added, smilingly, "but the former city of that name on the other side of the continent. We were first made aware of what had happened by telegraphic dispatches from the Isthmus, which, although at first rather incoherent, soon thoroughly informed us of what had occurred. But almost immediately we began to note the depression of temperature to which you have alluded, and our after-experience was precisely similar to yours.

"We were incontinently frozen up, and it becoming obvious that it would be impossible to live in such a climate, preparations were at once made for departure.

"All of the country lying north of Charleston, South Carolina, and east of Chicago, became perfectly uninhabitable, and the necessity for immediate action was obvious.

"Our dispatches from the Pacific coast informed us of the great change occurring in the climate of the country west of the Rocky Mountains.

"Public meetings were held in all the large towns and cities, and it was resolved to remove the entire population of the Atlantic coast to this section.

"At the first suggestion of the disaster the ships lying at anchor in the different northern ports had sailed southward, and these congregated in one southern harbor.

"The women and children were first removed, train after train carrying them south, to rendezvous at the ports which were open.

"It was next determined to avail ourselves of the Isthmus Canal, and, accordingly, the vessels, as fast as they received their living freight, sailed across the Caribbean Sea, and entering the current, were carried swiftly and safely through the Canal and into the Pacific. By this time the speed of the current had become greatly modified, and no difficulty was experienced in making a landing wherever it was desired.

"And now an astonishing thing happened. Ships began to arrive at our southern ports from Europe—chiefly from the Mediterranean Sea—and these were found to contain emigrants from Northern and Western Europe, who had been driven from their homes as had our people, and who had fled to the Western Continent as to the only possible haven of rest and safety."

Here a murmur of awe and surprise was heard about the table in the now crowded cabin of the *Jeannette*.

The sailors had heard of what was going on, and they had hung about the door, and gradually pushed their way within, and now stood in a group listening eagerly to the strange history that was being related by Doctor Harrington. The latter continued:

"They came by thousands, and by tens and hundreds of thousands. Many of them settled in our Southern States, where now exist a thriving, busy and happy population, made up of all races, but who live amicably together, and who have already become prosperous.

"Many others—whole shiploads—joined with our own people in sailing through the Canal, and began to build settlements along the coast of California, and in New Mexico and Arizona. There is now a teeming population, rich in this world's goods.

"Meanwhile, Canada sent her millions through British Columbia into the magnificent valleys of the Red River of the North, and the Yellowstone, and as far west as into Washington Territory. Their country now furnishes the grain for a population numbering many millions besides their own, while the Northern Pacific Railroad has opened the necessary outlet to the seas for its transportation to the south and westward.

"But I fear I am tiring you by this lengthy account," said Doctor Harrington, stopping to take breath.

He was quickly reassured on that point. The eager listeners crowded about him, begging him to go on with his narrative, which seemed, even to them, and after their own wonderful and exciting adventures, to be a newly-composed and magnificently recounted "Tale of the Arabian Nights Entertainments."

Doctor Harrington accordingly continued, after refreshing himself with a glass of wine:

"But the most extraordinary feature of this dramatic exodus remains to be told.

"Some one conceived the idea of rearing upon the western coast of America the actual cities which had existed on the Atlantic side of the continent.

"At first the scheme took one's breath away by its magnitude; but it was taken hold upon by strong men; it was considered at public meetings; eminent engineers and architects were consulted, railroad men and shipmasters were called into consultation, and at length it was pronounced feasible. Yet so daring was this magnificent conception, and so seemingly impracticable in its execution, that even now we can scarcely believe our eyes when we witness daily the evidences of the successful completion of the task. You must have seen, as you sailed up our bay, that many of the buildings here were familiar to you."

Here Wilcox remarked that he recognized several of them on sight, naming them.

"You are quite right," said Doctor Harrington, when he had finished. "Those are not imitations, but are the very buildings to which those of you who lived in the old New York, as we term it, must have become accustomed.

"Of course you wonder how such a colossal task could have been accomplished in the short space of four years.

"It was really concluded in less than three years, as they have been as they are now for about a year.

"And remember, my friends," said Doctor Harrington, waxing enthusiastic with the unaccustomed excitement of telling this story to those who were unacquainted with it—"remember that this great triumph of human strength, skill, ingenuity and perseverance was not confined to New York alone.

"Quite the contrary is the case, I assure you.

"But I must explain to you the limits of our "ice-period," which has increased upon itself, the tremendous depression of the temperature extending its limits far beyond the line of the old influence of the Gulf Stream. Fortunately, the new climatic influences occasioned by the combination of the two great currents in the Pacific have been pushed far east of the Rocky Mountains, or our situation would have been, indeed, deplorable.

"Imagine a line drawn from Charleston, S. C., running northeast from eighty to one hundred and twenty-seven degrees west long., or where that point meets the Arctic Circle.

"All east and northeast of that line is now, and has been for years, given up to ice and snow. East and north of Chicago there is to-day no inhabited country.

"Meanwhile, the public buildings, stores, dwellings, bridges, railway plant of this now devastated region have been removed from the towns, cities, or open country, as the case might be, brick by brick, stone by stone, rail by rail. These have been transported to new sites, have been erected in their relative positions, and at the present time every chief Ea-tern city and town stands at some point on the Pacific Coast, with its streets, public squares and parks all practically as they existed before. Even historically so, in most cases, the changes being few in number, the result of a necessity for a different adaptation to suit the necessities of the community which might be interested."

On hearing this statement, the entire assemblage in the cabin of the *Jeannette* stood erect, while one and all made the vessel ring with their cheers of admiration.

"But how was this stupendous work performed?" continued Doctor Harrington.

"It was on the principle which must have guided the ancient races that reared the massive temples of the East, that constructed the pyramids, and that formed the Pillars of Hercules. By what by this means, aided by all the advancement of modern times in the application of science to art, and in the capacity to utilize power. This principle was the employment of vast numbers of men.

"The perfect avalanche of emigration which poured down upon us from Europe brought to our shores hordes of men whose brain and muscle, and whose general physical health fitted them to encounter any task, however difficult, in the way of physical labor.

"Indeed, I believe it was the imminent necessity of employing these myriads of Scandinavian and Teutonic and Celtic giants that first awakened the idea that this great task was possible.

"Well, the women and children, as I have already stated, being sent westward as fast as they

arrived in company with our own, the men were retained on the coast and gradually acclimated, becoming very readily used to the excessive cold, as long as they knew they were not to be forced to end their days in it.

"Fortunately, the low temperature had come upon us so suddenly that little or no snow fell, and the work was thus rendered less difficult than it would otherwise have been.

"Of course, the foundations could not possibly be removed from the frozen ground, but the clouds of active workmen swarmed upon the superstructures, and buildings were demolished with a speed that was little short of miraculous, and a system whose excellence was mathematical.

"As fast as they were taken down, the materials were marked and transferred to the cars, and then transported south to open seaports, where they were transferred to the vessels which were to carry them to their destination. Arrived, these materials were set up on foundations which had in the meantime been constructed, cities and towns being laid out by the best engineers to match their examples, while the most skilled scientific assistance was employed in planning and executing suitable systems of drainage in every instance."

"And this truly wonderful and unexampled scheme," here remarked Doctor Beaumont, "has been executed, you say, with regard to every principal city and town in the section of country you have indicated?"

"Nearly all of them," was the reply.

"It is really inconceivable," said Captain Wortendyke. "And where, for instance, is the City of Washington?"

"Washington, which is still the seat of government, is in Southern Kansas, on the Arkansas River. Here are the Capitol, the Department buildings, the White House, the streets laid out at right angles, precisely as they were on the banks of the Potomac. Excepting, by-the-way, that the old White House has been replaced by a magnificent structure of white marble."

"And who is president?" asked Wilcox, eagerly.

"General Grant," was the reply, and then every one cheered.

"You will remember," continued Doctor Harrington, "that he was elected in November, 1880, by a union of the Republicans and the bolters from the regular Democratic party, the Southern States casting for him a very large vote.

"Well, as you know, also, he was re-elected for a fourth term in 1884. What you do not know is that in 1880 he was made president for life, with the privilege of naming his own successor. But he is still in excellent health, and through the troublous times, which began in '87, he has successfully conducted the country to apparently permanent prosperity and grandeur. The American people long since became satisfied that the frequent change of rulers was the one weak spot in the original framework of the government, and they rest happy in the knowledge that this evil is at last done away with."

"But," said Wilcox, who was a rampant Democrat, "what has become of the Democratic party?"

"Oh, there are no more parties. The terms Democrat and Republican are forgotten."

"Great Scott! here's a deal," said the astonished *Herald* correspondent, relapsing into slang.

"Ha, ha!" laughed Sam; "they only waited to get you out of the way to revolutionize politics."

"I have just got one question I would like to ask," said Wilcox, timidly.

"Ask it, my dear sir," responded Doctor Harrington.

"Is—is the New York *Herald* in existence?"

"In existence? I should say so, indeed. It is the leading paper of the world; indeed, there is none other that approaches it. Of course, the London papers being dead——"

"And, my dear sir," eagerly put in Captain St. Clair, "what—what has become of Queen Victoria?"

"She is living with one of her daughters somewhere in Italy."

"Thank heaven for so much!" ejaculated Lieutenant Jasper.

"Ah' yer honor, ar yer plase, I'd be glad to ask yer honor a worrud," said Terence, who had pushed his way to the front, as he caught a glimmering of the facts of the case.

"Certainly, my good fellow; ask anything you like."

"Phat has become of the Orish?"

At this question, asked in the most earnest manner, every one laughed until the cabin resounded with the outcry.

"The Irish, my dear fellow; why, they are the best citizens we have. Formerly we used to get only the riff-raff and scum of Cork and Queenstown, and the most ignorant of the peasantry. But this occurrence brought to us the whole population, nearly, and a splendid class of men and women they are; none better."

"Begorrah, I knowed it. I always said as whin me an' the rest of the *vale* O'reils come over, the Americans would see we was gintlemin."

At this sally the laughter again burst forth, Doctor Harrington joining in with great enjoyment.

When quiet had been restored, Captain St. Clair asked how far the present condition of the climate extended in Europe.

"Well, sir," replied Doctor Harrington, "it is just about the same as it is in America. If you draw a line northeastwardly from the Bay of Biscay, cutting the Arctic Circle at a point in fifty-five degrees east longitude, you will inclose the country affected. This will include Northwestern France and the British Islands, the whole of Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Norway and Sweden, of course Denmark, and the greater part of Russia."

"It is, in fact, on the globe a triangular section cut out of the hemisphere, one hundred and eighty degrees across its northern boundary, and coming to a point in the Atlantic Ocean about in longitude thirty-five degrees west."

"One question more, if you please," said Lieutenant De Vergne.

"Proceed, sir," courteously responded the health officer.

"Is the Isthmus Canal a success?"

"A perfect success. It is wide enough for a number of large vessels to pass each other with ease while sailing through it, and the current is sufficiently swift to give them with sails, or steam, as the case may be, a speed of from ten to fifteen, and even as high as twenty-five miles an hour."

"And what became of the volcano?" inquired Sam.

"The volcano disappeared in less than twenty-four hours after it burst forth. It was drowned out, though from the account of eye-witnesses, the struggle between the elements must have been terrible."

"But, doctor," said Mrs. St. Clair, as he rose from his seat to leave the cabin, "tell me one thing. Did most of the New York people come to this city? I mean the wealthier and well-to-do classes."

"Nearly all of them, madam. And they conduct business and society here just the same as they did East. In fact, you will scarcely know the new city from the old one, except that it is far better governed. But I must really be going, for you forget that I have to report the most wonderful event of all the return of the long-lost *Jeannette*."

Doctor Harrington accordingly returned to his boat, and was rapidly rowed ashore.

He had desired that all should remain on board until he could make known the glad tidings, as he was certain the authorities would desire to give the commander, his officers and crew, and their guests, a suitable reception.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE WORLD ALL RIGHT, AFTER ALL.—CONCLUSION.

THE world had been turned topsy-turvy, to be sure. England and Ireland were in America, and Norway and Sweden in the South of France, Russia, no longer glaring a Bonconsfield or a Bismarck—those busy B's—had migrated into Tartary and Cabul, and now controlled and governed India, living amicably, however, with the British residents.

Germany thronged along the shores of the Mediterranean and the Levant, the hardy Swiss peopled the Apennines and the Tyrol.

On the Western Continent the waste lands were now thickly populated, and already the Great American Desert bloomed with the Eucalyptus-tree in thousand and teeming thousands.

The splendid sheet of water—Prince William's Sound, two thousand seven hundred miles in area—on which the magnificent metropolis looks) out toward the shores of Asia, was beautified at intervals with those other noble Eastern cities, whose ancient titles were now the home of the white bear and the gray wolf.

Portland and Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Richmond, Wilmington—all the principal Atlantic cities north of Charleston were here.

Southward, the coast of Washington Territory and of British Columbia gave a home to Montreal and Quebec, Halifax, St. John, and the other principal Canadian cities and their inhabitants.

At Puget Sound and on Vancouver's Island were magnificent commercial cities, here being the great western terminus of the Northern Pacific Railroad, which ran through a highly fertile region, inhabitable all the way from the western shore of Lake Superior, and occupied by millions of those who were formerly British subjects, but who now recognized the Government of the United States.

Southward and through Oregon, Upper California and New Mexico, were settled the former inhabitants of the inland towns of the New England and Middle States.

A vast Empire had been gathered together and created on the eastern shores of the Pacific Ocean, grander in population and in territory than any that had ever occupied its western coasts.

A tremendous conflict had been waged with the elements. A courageous escape from the threatened bondage of the ice-king had been undertaken and accomplished.

But sufficient has been written to present to the reader the general characteristics of the story which, little by little, was unfolded to our friends of the *Jeannette*, and whose main features of interest they were presently to explore for themselves.

* * * * * *

But a little while had elapsed after the departure of Doctor Harrington, when the firing of cannon from the forts which guarded the entrance to the harbor, and from numerous ships-of-war at anchor, and the speedy flinging to the breeze of the flags of all nations, from all the vessels in port, gave token to the passengers on board the *Jeannette* that their arrival had been made generally known.

Now boats put off from the shore and surrounded the steamer, Yachts spread their canvas and sailed around her. And thousands of seamen manned the yards of their respective ships, and cheered themselves hoarse in noisy welcome of the long-lost explorers.

Then a sharp, swift little steam-yacht sped over the water, and, nearing the *Jeannette*, slowed up, and sent a boat having on board several gentlemen, who quickly boarded her.

They proved to be the generous founder of the expedition himself, with friends, prominent city officials, and the ever-present reporter.

The commander was welcomed by the mayor of the city and civic functionaries. Wilcox reported to his chief, and was presently the centre of a group of admiring journalists.

Other boats brought personages of various dignity on board, and each and all of the officers, crew and passengers of the returned vessel found himself surrounded by old or new friends, ready to take his comfort and amusement in charge.

It was arranged that all should go on shore in the *Herald* yacht, and the transfer was quickly made.

And just at sunset they left the noble vessel which had been so long a home to them, and amid the shouts of thousands of voices, the firing of guns and the performance of martial music by the bands on the ships-of-war, sped rapidly toward the shore.

Here were gathered the entire population, surging in vast multitudes back from the wharves and through the principal streets.

A procession was formed, with bands of music, carriages containing the returned explorers and their guests, and the entire cortège, with its surroundings, pierced the multitude in the streets, and wended its way slowly and with difficulty toward the chief hotel, where suites of rooms had been already provided for the expected visitors.

Our friends were soon scattered after their arrival at the hotel, but it was with the promise to meet on the following morning in one of the parlors of the hotel for final discussion of their voyage and its wonderful terminations.

In the meantime, they were the recipients of an ovation such as had not been before heard on the Pacific—since the return to San Francisco of General Grant, twelve years before, after his two years' absence on a journey around the world.

Captain St. Clair and Lieutenant Jasper speedily found old friends, to whom they presented the British captain with polite and affection.

Wilcox had his hands full having to prepare—willy-n-lly—an account of the leading facts of his experience for the columns of the *Herald*, for publication the next morning. So all night he was dictating from his notes to stenographers, fortifying himself by the frequent employment of sandwiches and heavy libations of champagne. He found, to his present cost, for he would much rather have been enjoying a *tête-à-tête* with Emmeline—that the *Herald* Building was removed to the new metropolis, and that the well remembered grind went on there as formerly.

Sam gave Captain Wortendyke much trouble to keep track of him that night, and finally was lost sight of altogether by that officer, in the small hours of the next morning he was found by his brother, relating his adventures to a select party of newly-made friends in a first-class restaurant, and was captured and carried back to the hotel by the telegraph-operator and the doorkity captain.

Terence Queeny and Pierre Piamont hunted as a couple, and were taken excellent care of by a party of choice spirits, among whom it became difficult, after a few hours, to tell whether the French or the Hibernian language predominated.

Professor Corbeau, Doctor Beaumont and Lieutenant De Vergne were seized upon by the American Geographical Society, and being carried perforce to their rooms, were soon put in the way of delineating their Arctic route on maps supplied for the purpose.

Lieutenant Jasper—faithful to the last—had sought to follow his superior officer, and by that measure found himself introduced into a select party of ladies and gentlemen who were enjoying a supper at the Delmonico's of the period.

The worthy lieutenant would have gladly excused himself from further attendance on the captain when he found what sort of a situation he had got into, but being at once pounced upon by the ladies of the party, and made much of, he soon forgot all about his intention, and enjoyed himself hugely.

Thus all of our party were cared for on this, their first night in a civilized land after—after how many years of wandering was it?

This last question troubled the minds of all of them, more or less, and it was chiefly to come to some conclusion regarding it that the appointment for the next morning had been made.

One important question, however, was settled on this very night.

The party at the rooms of the Geographical Society were joined late into the night by no less important a personage than the commander of the *Jeannette*, who had passed the earlier hours of the evening in making an unofficial verbal report to the founder of the expedition.

This being finished, the commander had proceeded to join the more sedate and scientific members of his party, taking with him the *sealed can* which had been found by Sam at the mouth of the Rock, or Great Fish River.

It was his design to open this can at once, in the presence of such distinguished scientific persons as had been hastily got together—the proprietor of the *Herald* being desirous of adding the information to be thus obtained to the general account, which would see the light next day.

With a brief account of the incident of finding the can and introducing Sam, who had not yet succeeded in escaping from the restraint of his elders and superiors, the commander proceeded to break it open. Within was found a small bag of oil-silk, and in that was a scrgll of paper.

This paper was found to contain, in very much faded writing, evidently made with difficulty, a brief statement by the last survivor of the party which left King William's Land and crossed over to the main land, in the neighborhood of the Great Fish River. It gave information concerning Sir John Franklin, except that he, with a party including Captain Crozier, had taken advantage of an open Summer, and proceeded in boats toward the North Pole, after which period they had not been heard from so far confirming the terrible story hinted at by the two beings whose conversation had been overheard by Wilcox and Sam, while in the interior of the earth).

The party to which the writer had been attached had perished miserably, one by one, near the spot where the can was discovered. The writing was blurred and nearly illegible, and this was all the information it afforded.

The whole statement was at once entered at length on the minutes of this very "special" meeting of the American Geographical Society.

On the following morning, at the appointed hour, the entire *Jeannette* party, excepting the sailors, who were being cared for by the authorities, met in one of the parlors of the hotel with closed doors, no reporters (excepting Wilcox, of course), being allowed admission.

The commander called this last meeting of our friends to order, and with a few somewhat sad reflections concerning their impending separation, announced that the principal object of the meeting was to reach some scientific conclusion which should remove from the history of the voyage of the *Jeannette* the stigma of her having lost three or five years out of her reckoning.

He desired each one present by name to offer some reason by which this extraordinary disturbance of the accuracy of the log-book could be cleared up.

The responses were peculiar, many of them being declared irrelevant.

For instance, Wilcox insisted that the whole affair—voyage, Jeannette Island, North Pole and Aztec race—was nothing but a dream.

He was summarily set upon by Captain St. Clair, who brought forward Tolula triumphantly, and desired to know if the *Herald* correspondent saw anything like a dream in her.

As the captain further hinted that possibly Emmeline and the scenes in the boat were a part of the dream, Wilcox gave the matter up as a "conundrum," as he termed it.

Various other explanations—more or less frivolous—were volunteered, but nothing satisfactory was obtained until it came to the turn of Lieutenant Jasper, who astonished everybody by offering a singularly scientific explanation.

"Why, it's as clear as mud," said he. "Hasn't it been admitted that the hub of this world turns round faster than the surface?"

"Granted," said Lieutenant De Vergne.

"Why, then, wouldn't we lose?"

"Have what?" inquired Professor Corbeau.

"Why, gained—that is, lost—— Oh, it's no use," and the good lieutenant sat down discomfited, amid the laughter of all the rest.

"I know what did it," cried Sam, when the confusion had somewhat subsided, and he leaped to his feet excitedly.

"Let us have it, my boy," said Captain Wortendyke, patting him on the shoulder to encourage him.

"Why, when those fellows had us down there in that hole by the North Pole, they magnetized us, and put us to sleep for three years."

"While they were making the wires to blow up the *Jeannette*," said Wilcox, sarcastically.

But this was the nearest they came to it, and all the commander could do with his log-book, was to enter upon one of its leaves, as they do on the play-bills:

"A period of three years is now supposed to elapse."

* * * * * *

Let the kind reader who has perchance patiently followed the thread of this eccentric story thus far suppose that a period of three years has elapsed from that of the occasion last mentioned.

Lieutenant De Vergne, Doctor Beaumont and Professor Corbeau are in the South of France, regaling their countrymen with an account of their surprising adventures.

Captain St. Clair and his wife are settled in the new Washington, in Kansas, where they are hand-and-glove with the rulers of the redeemed country.

Captain Wortendyke runs a trading vessel—for fun—down the Pacific, through the Isthmus Canal, and so to the Mediterranean, and Lieutenant Jasper is his chief officer.

Ralph Greenough is manager of the Eastern Union Telegraph Company, and is still unmarried.

Sam married Tolula, and then, despite the remonstrances of his companions, traveled about his country exhibiting her as "The Original North Polander," delivering a lecture which was written for him by Wilcox, as a parting act of friendship. The "show" took amazingly, and Sam is on the high road to fortune.

Wilcox is city editor of the *Herald*, and being married to Emmeline, has reached the height of his ambition.

Terence Queeny is Alderman of the Fifty-second Ward of the new New York, and a prominent American politician.

Pierre Piamant is head-cook at the hotel where the party were entertained on their arrival; he made the engagement the night he got there.

The gold, which was to make them all rich, was found on examination to be a new species of magnetic ore, and not gold at all.

And no other of all the discoveries made by the various parties, whose strange adventures we have sought to describe, so disturbed the general equanimity as did this one.

It was, indeed, the chief reason for the departure from America of the three scientific Frenchmen.

Sam, when he heard of it, remarked:

"Well, now, I know what you mean by "Topsy-turvy."

The adventurous travels of our Arctic explorers were duly set down in a volume prepared for the press by the *Herald* correspondent, and embodied in the Transactions of the American Geographical Society as a special compliment to all concerned.

Of course the charts of the Arctic region had now to be revised, and much discussion, public and private, accompanied the performance of this important scientific labor. "Jeannette Island" was duly located in its proper position, as was also the volcanic land, which could not be disputed, owing to the fact of the actual presence of a native, in the person of the charming Tolula. But when it came to establishing the position of the Pole itself, and to defining the intermundane land which had there been discovered, the savans and wiseacres negatived the proceeding. And as no navigator was found of sufficiently adventurous disposition to attempt a second visit to this region, it was unanimously concluded by the Geographical Societies of Christendom that they must draw the line somewhere, and they would draw it at the Pole.

There were not even wanting those who declined to believe this portion of the narrative, and it is to make clear the absolute veracity of the entire statement that the present work has been written. When it is remembered that the testimony of those who were engaged in this remarkable journey is of course at any moment attainable, the absurdity of questioning any of the statements herein contained becomes at once obvious.

THE END.

THE NAVY OF THE UNITED STATES—ITS ORGANIZATION.

(Continued.)

THE officers' dinners is generally announced by the Drummer and Fifer playing "Roast-beef." I remember a case which came to my notice aboard of a vessel I commanded. The Executive Officer, who had no ear for music, one day approached the Drummer and Fifer and huskily addressed them.

"What do you mean by playing that tune?"

"Why, sir, it's 'Roast-beef,'" was the reply.

"Roast mischief. Play another tune."

The Drummer and Fifer played several airs. The Executive shook his head disapprovingly.

"Not that one," said he.

At last one was played; the Executive smiled and exclaimed:

"That's it."

Nearly every day I was startled by a tune I knew well. Two weeks had elapsed since the Executive had spoken to the musicians, when I stepped forth and asked the Officer of the Deck the reason the musicians were drumming that air. He replied:

"It's 'Roast-beef,' sir."

I called the Drummer and asked him if he could play "Roast-beef."

"Oh, yes, sir," he replied, smilingly; and he did so.

"Why, then, have you been playing the 'Rogue's March' to announce the officers' dinner?"

"Sir," said he, touching his cap, "Mr. ——, the Executive, ordered me to play that tune. He said it was 'Roast-beef.' To contradict him would have been a breach of discipline. I had no other alternative than to play the 'Rogue's March,' as ordered. It didn't do any harm, sir, as the officers didn't know the difference."

The apartments assigned to the officers are, the cabin for Commanding Officers, the "Ward Room" to the Commanding Officers—that is, to the Executive, Navigation, Watch Officers, Engineers, Surgeons, Paymasters, Chaplains and Admiral's Secretary. The steerages to the Ensigns (not Watch Officers), Midshipmen and Clerks.

The "Forward," or "Warrant Officers," have their state and mess-rooms forward of the steerage. Unless the officers draw their rations, and live on them, they pay a mess bill—that is, contribute a sum for the support of the mess. They elect a caterer, who attends to the purchase of the stores, keeps the accounts, etc. If he proves inefficient, another is selected. Formerly the caterer, if he was not acceptable, was "broken." I remember one who laid in three months' mess-stores; two barrels of whisky, six barrels of potatoes, two barrels of onions, and one keg of tongues and sounds. As the old Roman knight was degraded by having his horse taken from him, caterers are deposed by breaking a "hard-tack," or biscuit, over their heads. I need not say the ceremony was performed on this occasion.

The Sunday routine on board of men-of-war consists in cleaning ship and getting her ready for in-

THE NAVY OF THE UNITED STATES.—THE SHIP'S CREW AT DINNER.—SEE PAGE 199.

spection, for on that day the commanding officer visits every part of the vessel, to see that she is in perfect order, and that the men are well dressed and present a "ship-shape" condition. The crew is first inspected by divisions of their respective officers. When the bright work is cleaned and the men dressed in their mustering uniforms, the officers report it to the Executive Officer. At "four bells," or two o'clock, the drum is beat to inspection, the crew is mustered, at their guns, and other stations and reported by the Division Officers to the Commanding Officer, who orders the Executive to "form for inspection." At this order the drum is "tapped," the men march to the rear of the guns, and form in line facing the bulwarks. When they have formed the order is given to "draw swords," which they do, resting the back of the blade against the right shoulder. The Executive then reports to the Commanding Officer "Ready for inspection, sir." As they pass in front of the divisions the officers and men present arms, and the Captain and Executive inspect the men, the bright work, the spattering, spar decks, and then repair to the "birth deck," where the cooks display their chest and "mess gear." The holds and apartments and store-rooms are also inspected. As soon as the Captain returns to the spar deck and has reviewed the Marine Guard, he orders "Beat the retreat." At the last tap of the drum the crew disperse.

Then preparations are made for divine service. A small table is placed on the quarter or hall deck, and covered over by the United States Ensign or Jack; chairs for the officers are placed on the starboard side in port, and to windward at sea, and capstan-bars laid across buckets are the seats of the sailors. The bell is "tolled," and such of the officers and crew as wish to attend service repair aft. Formerly all hands were compelled to attend divine service; it caused considerable dissatisfaction, as it was an unconstitutional order, and some chaplains abused creeds not their own. Indeed, it was the cause of an order issued by Captain T—— to the Boatswain and Mates, "that whenever Chaplain B—— so far forgot himself as to refer disrespectfully to other religions in his sermons they were to pipe "Belay, and pipe down." "Belay" means to take several turns around a pin, to prevent the rope from rendering or slipping—to secure a rope, "brush" ship. On the following Sunday, Chaplain B—— having referred to another religion, giving offense to its followers, the "Belay" was piped, and the officers and crew scattered, leaving the chaplain to his thoughts.

[To be continued.]

How to consume time—Eat dates.

THE JANITOR'S BOY.

A STORY OF NEW YORK.

By WILLIAM O. STODDARD.

CHAPTER III.

IN the course of the day Mr. Ponnerby spoke to Mr. Dunman about a boarding-place for Silas Morgan.

"I promised his uncle you would attend to it for him."

"It's already attended to, my dear sir. There's a small room vacant in the very next house to mine. Philip can show him the way. The price is about what he expected to pay."

"Glad of that. His people are not poor, but money is money nowadays, and it will be two years, at least, before he can pay his own way."

And so it came to pass, when the day's work was over, the two boys found themselves on their way up-town together.

Silas had plenty of questions to ask, and he asked them.

He soon found out that old Mr. Ponnerby was about to go into the country for the Summer, and that Mr. Dunman would have no vacation, nor Phil either, until the old gentleman returned.

He had been a good deal puzzled about some things at the office.

"Mr. Dunman shut up the safe without looking it."

"Did he, though?"

"Yes, and I couldn't see any keyhole, even if he had a key."

Phil was a polite boy, but he laughed now.

"Why, don't you know that is a combination-lock? Best kind, don't use any key. I'll show you in the morning."

"But the outer door wasn't closed, only the office door."

"Yes, and the janitor's key opens that, too," replied Phil.

"What's a janitor?"

"Don't you know that, either? Why, he's the man who takes care of the building, sweeps it out and keeps it clean. There are other offices there. He and his wife take care of them all."

"But don't you ever have any goods on hand for sale?"

"Not in that building. They're in warehouses, in one place or another. Bales of cotton and tobacco, hogsheads, barrels, boxes, all sorts of things. Sometimes they are sold over and over again without ever being moved."

"Stay where they are?"

"Of course. Oh, but haven't you a pile of things to learn before you get to be a merchant?"

"I guess I have. But who is our janitor, and where does he live?"

"Name's MacNamara, and he lives next door."

THE JANITOR'S BOY.—"'LOOK HERE, CAPTAIN,' EXCLAIMED VANDY; 'THERE'S A DOOR FROM THAT BUILDING INTO THE NEXT ONE THIS WAY. IT'S ABOUT THE MIDDLE OF THE THIRD LOFT, AND IT'S ONLY ONE THICKNESS. BUT, THEN, IT'S IRON.'"

THROUGH THE HEART OF JAPAN.—"THAT SAMURAI IS MY FRIEND. HE HAS TAKEN TOO MUCH OF YOUR EXCELLENT SAKE, BUT WILL SOON BE ALL RIGHT. IN HIS EXHILARATION HE HAS SAID SOME FOOLISH THINGS. YOU UNDERSTAND, HE IS ONE OF US!"—SEE PAGE 202.

"Next door!"

"Yes; the top floor of the building. He keeps house up there. He's got a boy that sometimes runs of errands for us. Sharpest boy you ever saw, but Mr. Ponnerby is a little down on him."

"What for?"

"Says he's too old. 'No boy ought,' he says, 'to be more than forty-five at fifteen.'"

"He's a curious old gentleman."

"Well, he is. Nobody understands him exactly, unless it may be Dunman. Sometimes he don't."

"Hope he's got me a good place to live in."

"Trust him for that. I'm glad I don't board. It would sweep out all my pocket-money."

"Don't you?"

"Oh, no, I live at home. It's a mile farther up-town. We'll be at your place in a few minutes."

There were plenty of other things to talk about, and the way seemed short accordingly.

Sile learned that Mr. Dunman was a bachelor, and he had heard that he boarded "next door," but when he and Phil got there, he saw at once that there was a good deal of difference between the two "doors."

That is, between the really elegant brown-stone front of Number 150, where the junior partner had his rooms, and the dingy, old-fashioned brick building, in one of the narrow "hall bedrooms" of which he and his trunk were to be stowed for the hot nights of the Summer, which was just beginning.

"The expressman 'll be up with your trunk before long," said Phil. "Dunman has attended to everything else. He never misses anything. Let's go in and look at your den. Then I'll go home, but I'll come for you after supper, and we'll take a look at the city."

That just suited Sile, and in a few moments more he and Phil had made the acquaintance of his landlady, Mrs. Brown, and had been shown into the little "seven-by-nine" room, in the third story, with its narrow bed and plain but very neat furniture.

"You'll do famously here," said Phil. "You won't keep a cat, so you needn't be trying to swing one."

"Knock her head off if I did," replied Sile. "Tell you what, I don't believe it'll take a great while to get the hayseed out of my hair."

"Guess not," said Phil, "if you go at everything the way you did at those errands this morning. Vandy MacNamara himself couldn't have got around with them much quicker."

"Is he the janitor's boy?"

"Yes, and half the time he's janitor, too. He knows more than his father and his mother and his whole family put together. He's a great boy, Vandy is."

"Queer name. Never heard it before."

"Nor anybody else. But, then, his mother is Dutch on one side and French on the other, and she tacked them both on."

"Tacked them on? How?"

"Why, she can't read, but she knows that Van is Dutch and De is French, so she gave him both of them."

"Dutch-French-Irish!" exclaimed Sile. "Now, do you know, I was thinking something of that kind." Born in this country, too?"

"Born in that very building."

"And of course he knows all about that part of the city?"

"Of course he does."

"Well, then, I don't mind telling you, Vandy MacNamara went around with me on my errands this morning."

"Did he, though? It was the best thing you could have done. It isn't every boy from the country would have thought of that."

Phil and Sile were in a fair way to become well acquainted with one another, and any prejudice there may have been on either side was rapidly wearing away.

Perhaps Phil Hawkins was inclined to be a trifle uppish and citified, but he had sense enough to see that Sile Morgan was quite likely to prove his "equal" in any way he chose to take him. It was likely, too, that they would have plenty of time to cultivate one another, for when Mr. Ponnerby and Mr. Dunman sat down in the little private room, back of the main office, that afternoon, they had agreed between themselves, as Mr. Ponnerby explained it, that "this is likely to be as dull a Summer for business as we've ever known, and what little there is 'll be dangerous to do."

"You can make your vacation as long as you please, then," said Mr. Dunman, "and lose nothing by it."

"That's so; but I must come back and give you a spell."

"Don't hurry. When do you go?"

"Day after to-morrow. I'll enjoy it all the more for knowing that you are not working yourself to death. That new boy promises well."

"Silas Morgan? Oh, yes. But we'll know more about him after a few weeks. I hope he is a little fonder of hard work than Phil Hawkins is."

"The only boy we ever had around here that seemed to really enjoy hard work was that MacNamara boy. But, then, he knows too much."

"I can't say I agree with you about that. No fools for me."

"Nor for me; but I don't want my tools to be all edge. Rather have a handle somewhere. Something to take hold of, eh?"

And old Mr. Ponnerby chuckled to himself, as if he where calling to mind some sharp operation or other of the janitor's boy.

There was no manner of doubt but what Vandy, or Van De MacNamara, had made and earned a special reputation of his own.

CHAPTER IV.

DID you ever stand on a seashore and see the tide come in?

Did you notice how the waves followed one another in swift succession, covering, inch by inch, long reaches of sandy beach, and rising steadily over the heads of rocks which a little time before were dry?

And then have you ever seen the tide go out, letting go of rock after rock, and leaving the sandy slopes and level dry again?

There is just such an ebb and flow to the business population of lower New York.

It comes in the morning in a surging, eddying, jostling current of human beings, from over the ferries and from the railway-stations, and in the omnibuses and street-cars, and on foot. It stays all day, washing hither and thither among the streets and buildings, until, at about three o'clock in the afternoon, the ebb begins.

Then all the tide of men that poured in up to nine o'clock in the morning pours out again, and by five o'clock that part of the city is as much deserted, or nearly so, as if the yellow fever had driven its inhabitants away.

All who came go, but there is a larger number than one would think who did not come in, and who do not go out, but remain for the night, and for every night all the year round.

All sorts of people are these, but it would scarcely be saying too much to say that the most important of them all are the policemen and the "janitors," if we include among the latter all those who are "left in charge."

If it were not for these and their care and honesty, it is to be feared that those who go away would scarcely find the things they left behind them in shape for business in the morning.

There is little that need be told about the police, for everybody is talking about them, but very few besides their own employers ever have much to say about the janitors.

And yet a good deal might be said about them, for not a few of them are men who have had histories of their own.

Among them are men who have had offices and warehouses of their own in their day; men who have commanded regiments in the army; men who have held high social positions, and from among them have risen more than a few who ended by owning just such buildings as they began by sweeping out and looking up.

Vandy MacNamara's father did not not belong to either of these classes. Nor did his mother.

Not but what they were honest and trustworthy people, or that they did not have a good enough opinion of themselves, but they were never likely to rise above the fifth story, where they now lived.

In fact, that same fifth story, with its ample rooms and its conveniences, was a good deal of a rise for both of them, and they were in the habit of impressing strongly on their eldest son the gratitude he owed them for being born of such very respectable parents as themselves.

Not only did they insist upon his being grateful, but also that he should show his gratitude in a practical way, for Mr. MacNamara himself was much inclined to humor a touch of rheumatism he was blessed with; and Vandy's mother found his seven younger brothers and sisters too heavy a burden to be borne without a pretty steady allowance of help from the bright and active boy who had come into the world before them.

If it had not been for the "night schools" and his own thirst for reading, poor Vandy might have grown up under his many cares and duties, with as little of "book learning" as his father and mother themselves.

Not but what he had a good deal of idle time, but it was of a sort that had to be spent in or about the buildings of which his father had the care, and three o'clock was sure to bring him all the work one boy need have asked for.

On that particular evening there was somewhat less on his hands than usual, and he was even able to take things easy, as he walked from room to room of the now lonely old warehouse of which Ponnerby & Co. were the most important tenants.

He had attended to the upper stories first, and had left them all in good condition, plying his broom a little in one place and his dust-brush in another.

Ponnerby & Co.'s large front office was speedily put to rights, but it was nearly six o'clock before he reached the smaller inner room, where the more private affairs of the concern were transacted.

Vandy's black eyes glanced curiously around, as they always did when he entered that office.

He could not help having a good deal of respect for a place where so much money had been made. It scarcely occurred to him that a good deal might also have been lost there.

The big safe's Ponnerby & Co.'s. What heaps of money and of money's worth that iron box must have had in it! Besides, the account-books and things.

It was, indeed, a big one, and looked as though it might prove a tough customer for even the most experienced burglar.

And so it would, no doubt.

On either side of it, however, stood safes of about half its size—a sort of younger brothers in the safe family, and bearing a strong family resemblance.

"That's old Ponnerby's private box," remarked Vandy, after trying the door of the big safe and finding it all right. "No use to pull at this door. The old man never forgot anything in all his life. It's as tight as a drum. There."

So it was, and he turned his attention, as it in duty bound, to the other.

This is Dunman's. Wonder if he put that check in it? Guess not. He put it in bank right away. Hullo! I declare!"

Well he might, or anything else in the way of astonishment, for the door of Mr. Dunman's private safe swung wide open when he pulled the knob.

Vandy MacNamara had never dreamed of such a thing as that.

"There must have been a good deal on Dunman's mind to make him forget to lock his safe."

A shrewd remark for a boy to make, bet Vandy was no common boy.

There was the safe, wide open, and there were endless things which aroused all the curiosity within him to fever-heat.

"Wouldn't I like to rummage!" he exclaimed. "Wouldn't it be fun!"

It made him hold his breath to think of it, for he was sure he saw signs of stocks and bonds, and even greenbacks.

He set his teeth hard.

"No, sir-ree! You haven't any business to stir a thing. All you've got any right to do is to shut the door and lock it. Glad it isn't a key lock; then I'd have to stay and watch it all night. Guess I know enough to fix it as it is."

Vandy knew how to shut a combination-lock (anybody could do that), but after it was done only the man who knew how, that is, who knew the numbers of the combination, could undo it and open it.

Bang went the heavy door, as if Vandy were slamming his temptation in with it, then he turned the knob, and sent the strong, steel-bolts home. He heard a sharp little "click" as he set the lock, and then Mr. Dunman's safe was secure—safe against Vandy MacNamara or anybody else, except Mr. Dunman himself, or a pair of first class "crackmen."

"I must let him know about it in the morning," he said to himself, little guessing that at that very moment the junior partner of Ponnerby & Co., after his dinner at his club, was tormenting his soul with the question:

"Did I lock that safe or didn't I? Seems to me I did, and yet I somehow can't just remember doing it. I must go down bright and early in the morning."

And again and again that night did Mr. Dunman dream about it, and in one of his dreams he found himself catching old Mr. Ponnerby in the very act of robbing that safe of its most valuable contents, while Vandy MacNamara stood by, saying:

"Served you right, Mr. Dunman; you ought to have locked it, and then the old rascal couldn't have got in."

That matter of the safe was a source of more than a little uneasiness to Vandy, but it did not keep him from eating a hearty supper with his father and mother and their seven smaller fry.

[For continuation, see next page.]

Distinguished Scholars of Brooklyn (N. Y.) Schools.

WALTER D. GORHAM,

PUPIL OF GRAMMAR SCHOOL NO. 18, MAUJER STREET, BROOKLYN (E. D.), N. Y.

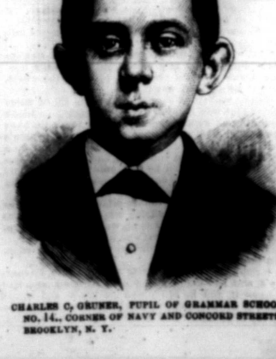
WALTER D. GORHAM is a youth of pleasant disposition and excellent scholarship, who has distinguished himself in the classes of Grammar School No. 18, Maujer Street, Brooklyn (E. D.), N. Y. He was born in New York, August 20th, 1863, making him sixteen years of age. He is the son of Frank and Sarah Gorham. About six years of age he began going to a private school, and at length became a pupil in his present school. He studied with great diligence and intelligence from the outset, and at all the examinations gave evidence of his increasing ability as a scholar. When we had our interview with him he was in the first division of Class A. The Principal of the school spoke of him as one of his best and most interesting scholars; a boy of good parts and good intentions, who was rising into manhood with a basis of morality and intelligence which could not fail to attract attention and serve as a guide to others. He is of modest, while self-possessed, manners, and has a face of much amiability. He seeks his companions among those of intelligence and good habits.

WALTER D. GORHAM, PUPIL OF GRAMMAR SCHOOL NO. 18, MAUJER STREET, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

CHARLES C. GRUNER,

PUPIL OF GRAMMAR SCHOOL NO. 14, CORNER OF NAVY AND CONCORD STREETS, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

CHARLES C. GRUNER is a very smart and excellent boy, who was introduced to us at Grammar School No. 14, corner of Navy and Concord Streets, Brooklyn, N. Y. The Principal regards him as a very persevering scholar. He accomplishes a great deal of work with his books in the shortest possible time, and no matter what else may occupy his time out of school, he is never behind in his studies. He has larger and intelligent class-



CHARLES C. GRUNER, PUPIL OF GRAMMAR SCHOOL NO. 14., CORNER OF NAVY AND CONCORD STREETS, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

mates, especially two other boys who are his immediate competitors. These three keep up a very strong rivalry at all times, and Gruner, with perhaps less opportunities of preparation than either of the others, keeps his place in the front rank of the class. He is an energetic, good-natured and conscientious boy. He loves to do well, and it is not possible to make him do wrong. He looks onward and upward, and, young as he is, he has an ambition which urges him to the utmost exertion of both mind and body. He is small in stature, with a smiling and intelligent face. As a boy, he is showing a vigor and enterprise, an intelligence, and a scholarly ambition which distinguish him among his classmates and companions, and in manhood he will swiftly improve every opening which may be presented to him.

THE JANITOR'S BOY.

(Continued from preceding page.)

These latter were plainly inclined to a high opinion of their b g brother, and seemed more than a little disappointed after supper that he did not go with them, as they poured down stairs to their "playground" in the rear, and deserted street. That is, it would have been silent and deserted but for them and other children like them.

All day long these swarms of little people who were now facing to and fro, or shouting to one another, had been shut up in schoolrooms—for it was not yet vacation time—or they had been kept in by their careful parents in the upper stories of the great buildings; but now that business hours were over and the business men gone home, all lower New York belonged to them, and they promptly took possession of it.

As for Vandy, he said nothing to his father and mother about the safe, and neither of them seemed to have any anxiety as to the manner in which he had attended to his work.

His mother looked up from the dishes she was washing to say:

"Now, Vandy, me boy, sure and you're not going to take to your readin' such a hot night as this?"

"No, mother, I don't feel like reading."

"Buk is good," remarked Mr. MacNamara, "but there's none of 'em can do much for the rheumatism, more's the pity."

"Such weather as this ought to be good for it," said Vandy.

"True for you. I'm a dale sisier than common. Mebbe a turn around the block 'll be the thing for me."

"Go along, then," added his wife. "I'll be down at the door when the dishes is done."

There was another lounging place beside the front steps of the street, but Vandy was the only member of the family that seemed inclined to it that evening.

He sauntered out of the kitchen and through the passage-way to the door of a dark room in the middle of the building. Two or three of the other rooms had flat skylights in the roof, and those in front and rear were well supplied with windows, but this had neither. There was a bed in it for a couple of the children, but its main use was as a sort of lumber-room.

That is, its use as a room, for it had another, not less important.

About in the middle of it arose a flight of wooden steps, a good deal like a ladder, and at the top of these was a "scuttle" leading out upon the roof. The scuttle was fastened down by iron hooks when it was on, but when Vandy mounted the steps it was thrown wide open to let out the hot air from below, so that he had nothing to do but to walk up and out.

There was a fine, cool breeze blowing up there, and the prospect all around was worth looking at.

In every direction it rose across the roofs and chimneys and steepies of the great city, and of other cities beyond—Brooklyn and Jersey City—and he could even see as far as Hoboken.

Southward, however, with only a comparatively narrow range of streets and houses between, lay the Battery, and beyond that the beautiful bay, with Governor's island and the smaller islands, and with the shipping at the wharves and with vessels of all kinds going to and fro over the water. Little tugs, lighters, ferryboats, sloops, schooners, great merchantmen, ocean steamers, and two or three gun-looking ships-of-war.

There, too, was the fort on Governor's Island, with its rows of embrasures for cannon, and the great guns frowning over the parapet, as if they meant to warn the city to be very good that evening, and keep still about it.

Vandy had seen it all a thousand times and more, but it was worth another look. If there was one thing he had thought of oftener than another it was that fort, and what a grand thing it would be to pay it a visit and put his hands on those black cannon and look out of those embrasures. He meant to do it, some day.

Every boy ought to visit a fort when he gets a chance, and see what sort of a thing it is. If he does not learn something he never knew before, he must be either a very wise boy or else a wonderfully stupid one.

The buildings next to Ponnerby & Co's. were about of the same height, and with roofs of tin that were nearly flat, so gentle was their slope from front to rear. Just enough to drain off the rain, and not enough to make them hard to walk on.

There was no wall or fence between those roofs, but there were wooden frames and posts set up, and clothes-lines stretched across, and a wooden paling had been made near the outer edge to keep little MacNamaras and other children from rolling off into the street.

That was the janitor's yard. It was a strange place, but not by any means an unpleasant one, and it was the best ventilated place in the world. All the air anybody might need.

Vandy walked on over several roofs till he came to one that was eight or ten feet higher—a blank wall of brick with a stone-coping on top. Perhaps the builder had meant that for an end of people's walks over the roofs, but somebody had put up a little ladder of iron rods, and Vandy climbed this like a squirrel. Then he took another look around him, and thought he could see more of everything than from his own roof.

He had been there before often enough, and he knew that the next building was nearly two stories lower, and that there was no way of getting down. But, for all that, he went and looked over.

Then he lay down, with his head over the edge, muttering to himself:

"Suppose somebody else had got into Ponnerby's, and had found Dunman's safe open, and had robbed it, and he had found his bonds and things gone in the morning, wouldn't he have been keely to lay it to father and me? I don't like it a bit. How do I know he may not miss something as it is, and think I forked on it? This janitor business doesn't suit me. I want to get out of it. I will, some day. I'm getting a little money together, and my chance 'll come. I must be on the lookout for it."

Then he thought what a great thing it would be to have a warehouse and an office of his own.

"Like this," he said to himself. "Ponnerby & Co. store heaps of their things in this very building. It's tall to the roof, and I've seen other things go in there besides cotton and tobacco. It wouldn't do for it to get afire."

Perhaps it was the thought of that which made him look behind him so suddenly. Or it may have been that he smelt something. Or it may have been a sort of feeling that the roof under him was suddenly getting warmer.

At all events, he looked back, and then he was on his feet in a twinkling.

"Smoke! That's a fact. It's coming up over the eaves. Hullo, what's that? Something bursting! Hear it crackle. I must get out of this. I'll bet they stored that crude turpentine in the upper story. If they did, won't there be a blaze!"

"Fire!" he shouted, as he sprang away across the roof. "Fire! Fire! Fire!"

He dashed down the little ladder to the other roof and hurried to the street end of it to lean over and shout, "Fire!"

And the men in the street heard him; and now the smoke was rising fast, and could be seen by any one, and the cry was caught up by voice after voice.

Everything in the city goes by telegraph, and in a few seconds more steam fire-engines sprang from their places in the engine-houses, as the electric-bells gave the alarm, and the faithful, intelligent horses barried from their stalls to their work. The men are never ready so quickly as the horses are, although the New York firemen are always on hand in time.

It was wonderful how soon it was, after Vandy shouted, that three steam fire-engines came rattling down the street, puffing great clouds of black smoke and sparks, and shouting fiercely at their work.

Then there came ladder-carts and hose carts, and squads of firemen and policemen, and there was shouting and climbing, and carrying of hose and of "nozzles," and a desperate effort to get the streams of water to bear upon that fire.

It is bad caught in one of the lower stories it would have been easy enough; but that building was a high one. What was more, it was unoccupied. Not even a janitor and his family to care for it, and the lower doors and windows were strongly bolted and barred, so that there was some delay in smashing in.

All that while the fire had its own way and will, and the flames were bursting through the roof by the time any water could be thrown on them.

"Taw't cotton," said one spectator.

"Cotton? Can't you smell the pitch? Water won't put out any such fire as that."

No more it could, and the firemen knew it well enough. As soon as they smelled the tell-tale odor they gave up all hope of saving that building. All they could do now was to roll bales and barrels out of the lower stories and do what they could to save the adjoining buildings.

Vandy remained on the roof until the black, stifling smoke drove him to the next one. Not that a fire was anything new or strange to him, but he was very much exercised over a question his curiosity had set a-going in his mind.

"How could that fire have got started up there? I don't believe that building's been opened for a week. Must be what they call spontaneous combustion. That means the turpentine and resin set itself on fire."

Just then an officer of the fire department came running past him with a speaking trumpet in his hand.

"Look here, captain," exclaimed Vandy, "there's a door from that building into the next one this way. It's about the middle of the third loft, and it's only one thickness. But, then, it's iron."

"Is there? Show it to me. Do you know if it's ever opened?"

"Not often, I guess. Both buildings are leased by Ponnerby & Co., but they don't use the lower part of the near one. Only the one that's on fire."

"That's a goner, then. Come along and show me that door."

The "scuttle" of that building was knocked off by another fireman with an ax, and down they went to the third story.

There was the door, bolted, with a padlock and chain to make it more secure.

"Locked on this side," said the fireman. "Looks like a strong one. We won't disturb it. Now to put a hose through. If it gives away this building's gone, sure. The wall's a good one, but that's a bad, weak spot. We must watch it close."

He forgot to thank Vandy, but it was just as well, for the latter wanted to be back on the roof of his own house, where his father and mother and all the little MacNamaras were now coming up through the scuttle.

They all came up, and then the firemen ordered them all to go down again.

"That's a bad fire for Ponnerby & Co.," said his father to Vandy. "That buildin' was full of their stuff."

"Guess it's all insured," said Vandy. "They look out for themselves."

"Fire's a bad thing, me boy."

"That kind of fire is."

"All fire alike, me boy."

Vandy was silent, but it seemed to him that fire was hotter than any other he had seen in a long time, and he wondered more and more how it got a-going.

A way up the flames were streaming now, and the roof on which Vandy had been standing so short a time before was all gone.

All the space between the high brick walls down to the third story was a roaring furnace, in which tobacco enough for an army and cotton enough to make shirts for them was being rapidly turned into smoke and ashes.

"It's the biggest pipe I ever saw," said Vandy to himself, "only it hasn't any stem."

The firemen worked well, and the steam-engines, with two more which came to help, shook all over in their tremendous efforts to drown that blaze.

It would not drown, however, and all that could be done was to prevent the fire from spreading.

"We'll not be burned up this time," said Mrs. MacNamara to her children.

If she had imagined they were frightened, however, she was very much mistaken, for the very smallest of them had enjoyed it as if it had been meant for a special show on their account.

Vandy was not scared. They all saw that, and they had unbounded faith in Vandy.

As for Mr. MacNamara, he seemed to have forgotten all about his rheumatism, and talked incessantly concerning the remarkable fires he had seen and helped at in his younger days.

The police and the insurance men and the firemen had it all their own way, so far as the owners of the building or its contents were concerned. Old Mr. Ponnerby was at his home in New Jersey, Mr. Dunman was up-town, nobody knew exactly where. And it was just as well, probably, that they should not be worried about it until the next morning. It would be a big enough bother then.

As for Vandy MacNamara, he watched that fire until the steam fire-engines had nearly flooded what had remained of it in the cellar, and he went to bed at last with quite a number of curious thoughts chasing one another through his brain.

(To be continued.)

"The Janitor's Boy" was commenced in No. 886.

Through the Heart of Japan.

By COMMODORE AH-LOOK,

Author of "KEEP YOUR BOUNDS," "INTERVIEW BEN," "ORVILLE AND DAN," "THE CHUMS AT HARVARD COLLEGE," ETC.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHAT THE JAPANESE NEWSPAPERS STATED.

NOTWITHSTANDING his courage, Johnnie felt that his fun was likely to cost him dear, and on the way home was all the time on the lookout for the ronins.

"Good-night!" said Benkei, as they prepared to retire. "Keep a stiff upper-lip, chum."

"You bet I will!" murmured Brackett; then away he went to his room, and locking the door, took a portrait of his mother from his valise, and gazing upon the photograph, in a low, husky voice: "You'll feel sorry if I lose my head, but you'd feel a deal worse if I ran away like a cur, wouldn't you?"

Placing the picture before him, he proceeded to write the following note:

"TOKIO, Japan, August 31st, 18—.

"DEAR MOTHER.—When this reaches you I shall be no more, having fallen a victim to my love of fun. I, by way of joke, shot a ronin Samurai in the eye with a spitball prayer, and the fellow being chock full of the spirit of Old Japan, or bad *saki*, which in most of these cases amounts to about the same thing, got on his ear and vowed to take my life. This, my dear mother, is one of the results of traveling, and as I would never have it said that I ran from my foe, I have lost my head.

"Please do not let father make a fuss about my death and demand an indemnity from the Japanese Government, like ours did for Richardson. I do not wish to have a city bombarded, and a lot of money screwed out of a whole people, just because I was foolish enough to put up a gag on a native nobleman.

"My dear mother, do not mourn too much about my fate. Remember in thus dying I have proved the truth of what you always predicted—viz., that practical joking would be my ruin.

"I am sorry not to be able to write this last letter in a more cheerful strain, but the fact is, I don't like the idea of losing my head; however, perhaps it's all for the best. I know I have caused you an awful lot of anxiety, for which I am sorry. Now you may rest contented I shall never play any more tricks.

"If the Princess Ichijo, of Haruko, ever visits the States, I want you, for my sake, to pay her the greatest attention. She is the only girl I ever loved. I had hoped to have brought her home to you as my better-half, but for that confounded spitball, would have done so long ere this, as will marry Doctor Benkei, who is a real good fellow.

"And now, mother, I must say *Sai-o-nara!* Of course the boys will have cabled the news, so before you get this you will know the worst. Give my love to father, and tell him I regret I have been cut off in the flower of my youth, as I anticipated having a grand old time in the heart of Japan. Chums will, no doubt, bury me with due honors, so you needn't worry on that score. They are noble fellows, and, like you and father, will, I fear, miss

"Your affectionate son, JOHNNIE."

"P. S.—I have a few old bills unpaid in Cambridge. Ask father to settle them up for J. B."

After carefully reading and sealing this document, he addressed it to his mother.

It never struck him as being comical, he having meant all he had written.

To tell the truth, his mind was made up for the worst, though he was determined to have a tussle for it.

"Poor mother!" he sighed. "Well, I shall have my name in the papers, and they will engrave it on one of the slabs in the transept of Memorial Hall, and the college boys will point to it and say, 'Poor old Johnnie: he was fond of a joke, so he was!'" Sighing, "What an end to a jolly life, to be cut down like a thistle, when in full bloom!" Then, after pausing and musing a while, he added, "By Jove! I must write to little Tofu. I'll say a good word for poor Benkei!"

Once more taking up his pen, he wrote:

"Hour of the Fox,
"TOKIO, August 31st, 18—.

"MOST LOVELY AND CHARMING PRINCESS.—In the words of our poet, Bryant, slightly altered to suit the occasion:

"'Tofu, we, who are about to die, salute you.'

"Ah, beauteous Princess! I am about to fall a victim to the Yamato Damashi; but ere I die would fain tell my love. I came here to meet you, when alas! cruel fate, in the shape of a most unreasonable *ronin*, threatens to deal hardly with me by cutting off my unfortunate head. I die for thee, sweet lady. When I am buried I pray you sometimes to visit my tomb and drop a tear for

"Your unfortunate adorer,
"Professor JOHN BRACKETT."

"P. S.—I bequeath all my phrenological works, and my chest of busts and charts to you. Study the science. You can get lots of fun out of it.

"JOHNNIE."

When he had gravely perused this and carefully dotted the i's and crossed the t's, he suddenly remembered Ben, and added a second postscript, as follows:

"DEAR TOFU—Smile on Benkei Yuzo when I am gone. He is a good fellow, and it will be handy for you to have a doctor in the house. Thine devotedly,

J. B."

"It's just as well to attend to these little matters!" he murmured. "If I am killed, she will know I died for her sake, or what amounts to about the same thing! Confound those spitballs!"

He tossed his cigar into a bronze *hibachi* (fire-bowl) that stood in the centre of the apartment; then, throwing himself upon the matted *kokoonma* (divan), dropped asleep, and was presently snoring worse than his rival, Benkei; nor was his slumber broken by visions of bloodthirsty, red-eyed *ronins*.

When he awoke, about six o'clock the next morning, he saw, on the mat near him, the scrap of paper that had been wrapped about the stone which the mysterious visitor had thrown into the window of Nami's house; so, taking it up, he began to decipher its hieroglyphics.

"Ah!" he cried, "I can only die once; besides, I'm not going to let Kura slice me like a cucumber! I'll buy a revolver and keep my eyes open. Under ordinary circumstances I would not carry a weapon, but this one calls for precautions; so, whether chums like it or not, I shall arm myself!"

As he spoke he threw the paper aside, and it fell into a *chatty* (shallow bowl) of water placed near the *hibachi* in case of fire.

The moisture gradually saturated the strip, when, to his astonishment, he saw that it had once formed part of an invisible picture, which now came out through the writing.

"Confound that wag, Nami!" he observed, as a smile overspread his features. "So he has, after all, put up a gag on me! Well, I'll own I was scared. Never mind! I won't let chums know; I will keep up the fun and turn the tables on them! I'll mail that letter to the princess, anyhow; it will make her think all the more of me!"

He rose and packed his trunks, as though going away, then addressed them:

Professor Brackett,
Boston,
Per S. S. *Great Republic*, Mass.

"Now," he said, as he quitted the *yashiki*, and walked toward the Tokio central post-office, "I'll mail this to Tofu, and go to a native restaurant and have my breakfast, after which I'll put on a Japanese rig and give the boys a surprise."

He carried out this plan, the native costumer of whom he purchased his suit entering into the joke with keen delight.

By seven o'clock Brackett was dressed in the old style which is still used by millions of Nihonese, and with the top of his head shaven and his back hair made up in a gun-hammer cue, entered a *jin-riki-sha*, and amid the grins of the tailor's men, started for Ta-ka-na-wa.

On his way he heard the newsboys shouting the morning papers, so, bidding the human propellers halt, he purchased four dailies—viz., the Tokio *Kwa-ki* (Mulberry-Tree) Asahi's journal, devoted to the Mikado; the Tokio *Sasaki* (Tree of Help), a loyal Samurai paper; the *Dai Butsu* (Great Buddha), a religious journal published by a company of bonzes, and the Tokio *Kohoda* (literally, high clogs or swaggerer) a lively comic paper.

These being printed in Japanese type, are easy to read, and Johnnie, who knew all of the characters, had no difficulty in perusing anything in them.

There are ten daily papers published in Tokio, and over two hundred in the other cities of the Empire.

These represent all classes, religions, and shades of thoughts, and are edited by highly-intelligent men, who say just what they mean.

Brackett leaned back in his man-drawn carriage, and opening the *Kwa-ki*, read the following:

"NARROW ESCAPE.—On the thirtieth day of this Moon, when our distinguished guests, the members of the expedition through the heart of Nihon, were out at Asakusa, a drunken *ronin*, ex-Samurai, attacked one of the party, but, not measuring his blow, struck the wooden arms of the god Ema. We are glad to record that Professor Brackett, the gentleman who was thus grossly assailed, escaped with a slight cut on the scalp. However, we are sorry to state that the *ronin* got away. The police are on his track."

"That's what our papers always informs us!" chuckled Johnnie. "I'm on his track now."

After glancing through a glowing description of himself and chums, evidently written by Prince Ando, Brackett laid aside the *Kwa-ki* and opened the *Sasaki*, in which he presently found this notice:

"YAMATO DAMASHI.—The spirit of Old Japan is not yet crushed. Only two days ago, in the Temple of the Thirty-five Tableaux of the Miracles of Jizo, a brave *ronin* ex-Samurai sought to wipe out one of the men whose presence pollutes our sacred soil. He failed to rid the Tenno of an evil adviser, but he still lives."

"So do I," murmured Brackett, with a grin. "That's what worries these spirits of Old Japan."

He tossed the paper to a foot-passenger, who eagerly grabbed it, then unfolding the *Dai Butsu*, saw a flaming editorial running:

"HAIL TO KUANON!

"ANOTHER WONDROUS MIRACLE!

"A *ronin* ex-Samurai attempts to cut down a To-jin, who is a guest of the Tenno! Kuanon appears and directs Ema to receive the sword-cut on his arms. The foreigner, amazed, convinced, is converted to Buddhism on the spot and vows to present the *Dai-butsu* with a thousand *yen*!" (dollars).

Johnnie stowed this away in order to read the lengthy account of what he had not done, murmuring as he opened the Tokio *Kohoda*:

"Not much! They won't get a cash out of this child."

After glancing over the leaders he came to one headed:

"HUMBUG EXPOSED.

"The foreigners are the boys! Before their clear light our ancient superstitions vanish like dew in the sunshine. Ah! they are wonderful! It is good to have them visit us. They act on our notions like physic on a sick constitution. We have, for centuries, been scratching our ears and looking with awe-stricken faces upon 'the mystic diagram,' when along comes one of our talented friends from afar and cries, 'Why, that is an old game for children—Tit-tat-toe!' What we know as *Hito-futo-mojyo*. No sooner do two of our lazy bonzes hear this than, greedy as pigs, they hurry off to the *Daibons*, each claiming the reward of three *ryos* in gold offered to the person who can decipher that wonderful mystery. Now comes the joke. Said the *Dai-bons* to the grasping bonzes, 'Oh, my brothers, that secret has all along been known to me. I only renewed the reward out of form.' Then he bowed them out, and lowering his fat hand in the

temple treasury, took from it the gold pieces and charged them as follows:

"'To solving the mystic diagram—three *ryos*.
"'Received payment, YAMAMOTO.
"'Dai-bons, Temple of Kuanon.'

"This is how the bonzes cheat everybody, even descending to swindle one another. Let us have the religion of the Americans! They, at least, do not worship money."

Johnnie laughed at this until the tears came into his eyes, then read:

"Our rascally bonzes are always shouting 'A miracle!' Now, the same most beautifully intelligent scholar, Professor J. Brackett, was illustrating the new law of gravitation by throwing heave-offerings, to show the scientific theory of the To-jins, when he accidentally struck a lazy *ronin* ex-Samurai in the eye. Instead of profiting by the illustration, what did that rowdy do? He went to a sword-juggler on the avenue and said: 'I have a favor to ask. I am a Samurai, who has been insulted by one of those foreign dogs. Lend me a sword and *ko-ka-ta-na* (dirk) that I may prove my loyalty to my lord, the ex-Shogun.' The juggler, who was a timid man, fearing this bully, loaned him a sword, saying, behind his hand, 'Don't tell any one from whom you got it.' 'All right!' answered the rascal, and away he went to hunt the guest of our enlightened ruler. After striding round he discovered the learned professor, smiling at the absurdities of the thirty-six miracles of Kuanon, and attacked him from behind, like a dog. In his haste, the assassin struck his sword into the arms of the laughable figure of Kuan, and just then the entrance of some persons scared the cowardly wretch, who fled *chip-chip* (in a hurry). Now, what do you sensible people think? No sooner did the *do-jer* of the temple see that he is one of the same bonzes who endeavored to claim the reward for deciphering the mystic diagram) than he exclaimed, in a pretended rapture, 'A miracle! See, Kuanon has interposed, in order to save the To-jin Sama!' but the professor only laughed at him. Spite of this, that blindly superstitious sheet, the *Dai Butsu*, is announcing 'Another Miracle!' Are there any people under the heavens so easily fooled as our own?"

"Yes," chuckled Brackett, as he stowed the paper in his sleeve. "Your folks are not half so fond of being humbugged as are we Americans. It's very comical to read these things. How like is human nature, whether American or Japanese!"

After a pleasant drag through the suburbs, the *jin-riki-sha* men halted the vehicle in front of a gateway, and pointing to a number of buildings half hidden among some noble trees, said:

"That is Senga-kuji. We are not allowed to enter the grounds."

He paid them, and passing under the *torii*, ascended the hill and inquired for the chapel containing the figures of the immortal heroes.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE RONIN'S MORE.

"THE Chapel of the Forty-seven *Ronins* is up on the hill there," said a ragged beggar, advancing and eying Jhonnie closely.

This man was none other than the *ronin* Kura, who, expecting the foreigners would visit the Springhill Temple, had assumed the disguise of a mendicant and was lying in wait for his victim. He saw that Brackett was a foreigner disguised in Japanese garments, and, concluding that he was a *ronin*, said, in a low voice:

"I perceive, sir, you are an *I-jin*; wherefore have you adopted our national garb?"

Johnnie was about to reply, "for a lark," when he recognized his enemy, who evidently did not know him; therefore he answered, in a confidential tone, speaking, of course, in Japanese:

"Yes, noble Samurai, I am an *I-jin*—a *ronin* like your honorable self. Will you please me by drinking a cup of *saké* to our common enemies?"

Kura felt pleased to hear this and accepted the wag's offer, saying:

"Indeed, nothing would afford me greater delight! Come this way, *Sama* (my lord)! I can take you to a place where they sell the *saké* of Hioto, which is considered far nicer than the stuff made in this city."

Brackett, feeling perfectly safe in his disguise, followed Kura, who, after conducting him in and out of the various by-paths near the temple, led the way into a wine-shop bearing this sign:

THE RONINS' VOW.

BY

NODA DAIGORO.

Hot and cold *saké* and rice-brandy of the best quality.

"Noda is one of us!" breathed Kura, as he squatted upon the matted floor and motioned Johnnie to do the same; then, signaling to a neatly-dressed waitress, cried: "Two pots of warm *saké* and some *kami-nari*!"

While the girl was filling the order, Kura said to his companion:

"I am glad I have met with you! I dreamed last night of a dragon—now, this is the dragon hour, and the *matsuri* (festival) of braves, like ourselves; therefore, all the omens are propitious. Come, come, tell me why you became a *ronin*?"

Brackett waited until the refreshments were placed before them, after which he replied:

"First, I beg leave of you to drink some of this excellent stuff!" (The *saké* smelt like stale wine.) "I am anxious to hear your noble history before I relate mine."

This tickled Kura, who thought:

"Ah, he is a true Samurai, like myself. I will use him as a means of obtaining my revenge;" then, clearing his voice, he said: "Of course, of course! —you know what is polite. You are one of us, and I hereby adopt you. Hold out your hand!"

Brackett did so as he was bid, and Kura, taking a *ko-ka-ta-na* (short dirk) from beneath his ragged robe, scratched his name on the palm deeply enough to draw blood, after which he borrowed a stick of India-ink from the waitress, and rubbing it into the lines, said:

"My brother, if we ever quarrel, open your hand, and when I see that, which will be there as long as you live, I shall drop my weapon and perform the Hespectful Ceremony. We call this 'the *ronin's* mark.' Now you must write yours in the palm of my hand."

Johnnie, who was almost dying of suppressed laughter, took the *ko-ka-ta-na*, and, after a fashion, scratched his signature in the required spot, having done which he rubbed in the ink, and remarked:

"Now we are sworn friends. You tell me your history and I will relate mine. What is your name, *Sama*?"

The Japanese are a most polite race, and are fond of addressing one another as your excellency or my lord.

Kura took the drink of *saké*, and placing himself near the fire-bowl, so that he could easily light his pipe, which had to be constantly refilled, said:

"My name is Kura-no-Suke—that is, Kura of the village of Seko. I am a descendant of Oshi Kura-no-Suke, the immortal *ronin* Suke, and my father was a noble Samurai in the service of our Lord Keiki, the ex-Shogun. I was born in the castle of Oishiro, and am to-day devoted to the master, who, by the blindness of the Tenno, has been degraded and exiled. I shall speak to you as to a brother, for you are, of course, now no longer an I-jin (foreigner), and like me, hate the enemies of Nihon!"

"Yes," nodded the joker, "I hate the enemies of Nihon!"

"Good!" ejaculated Kura, tossing another cup of *saké* down his throat. "We are as one. Listen, my brother. When the foreigners first came here we treated them politely, and explained that we did not want them, spite of which they crowded in. The result was the *Kuge* (Mikado's nobles) turned round in their nests and attacked us Shogun daimios, [lords] like wasps."

"Yes," said Johnnie; "Japan opened her arms to the world, and accepted the electric-telegraph, newspapers, printing-presses, steam-engines, railroads and other modern improvements. Go on, my brother."

"I do not call them improvements!" muttered Kura. "They are magical arts."

"Well, call them anything you like," chuckled Brackett. "How came you to be a *ronin*?"

"I submitted at first," said Kura, with a sigh, "and offered my sword to the Tenno, but the *Inaka Samas* (Jacks in office) told me they did not require any more throat-cutters. Then I tried for a position in the custom house, telegraph-office or civil service, and received the same reply. They knew I loved the Shogun, my late master, and mistrusted me—me, a noble Samurai!"

"That was mean of them," murmured Johnnie, smothering a laugh. "They ought to have given you an office."

"Certainly," nodded Kura. "Had they done so, I should now have been a Mikado's man. All I wanted was a position, such as that held by my ancestors, an allowance sufficient to keep me from debasing myself with work."

His companion nodded, and said:

"Yes; I understand. You felt, like our office-seekers, that the government ought to provide for you. Well?"

Kura drank *two* more cups of *saké*, and again refilling his pipe, remarked, complacently:

"I see you comprehend my case exactly. I hung about the castle for months, and spent all my patrimony. Meanwhile, I saw foreigners employed everywhere on fat salaries, while we patriots were starving. Of course, being a Samurai, I could not work. I am possessed of the Yamato Damashi, and would rather die than degrade my rank, as some have done. Would you credit it, I know of Samurai who have become telegraph-operators?"

"Lucky fellows!" grioned Brackett. "Don't you envy them?"

"*Ah-schee!*" spat the *ronin*; "they are as dogs! Such have not the true spirit of Old Japan. In vain I tried to live—then, came the cruel edict depriving me of our rank and wealth, and, finally, oh, shameful blow! an order from the Mikado for us to cease wearing our swords."

"That was rough on you," muttered his companion, pretending to wipe away a tear. "Of course you felt bad, didn't you?"

"I swore I would continue to carry mine," said Kura, emptying his cup for the seventieth time. "Ah, great Buddha, I made a solemn vow, but they came a hundred strong, and I yielded to force—loose, my brother."

"Shameful!" said the other. "So they not only refused to give you a government appointment, but took away your sword? *Naru-hodo!*" (Well, I never!)

"*Su-koshi-matté!*" (Wait a little) hissed Kura. "I am going to be revenged. I tried to obtain a position as cook with a merchant, an American's store in Yokohama, told them I was an ex-Samurai, and begged they would employ me. What do you think the man said, my brother?"

"Give it up!" gravely answered Johnnie. "Some of my countrymen will say anything."

"Ah!" ejaculated Kura. "he was a big, red-haired man, and when he heard that I had been a Samurai, he cried, '*Ohaio!*' (Good-morning.) Git out of this. I don't want any *dai ronins* (loafers) here."

"Outrageous!" sympathetically observed his companion. "Then what did you do?"

"I—walked off!" hissed Kura. "I went and imitated my ancestor, the noble Samurai, Oshi. I got drunk, and kept so, off and on, for a year. I showed my friends that I was imbued with the spirit of Old Japan. I became a *ronin*!"

"Just so," nodded Brackett. "Did you kill the foreigner?"

"No," mournfully answered Kura. "At the end of the year, when I went down to Yokohama to finish him and secure his head, I discovered that he had sold out and returned home. *Sa-koiona!*"

"That was mean of him," said Johnnie. "You bet he was a Yankee!"

"No, he was a *Gwai-koku-jin*" (an American), snapped Kura. "I never felt so bad as I did that day. On the following morning—the thirtieth of last Moon—I went out to the Temple of Asakusa in order to cut off my topknot and thus pretend to become reconciled to the new state of things, when, as I was in the very act of dedicating my cue to the goddess, 'snick!' came a heave-offering, catching me in the eye. On glancing angrily around I saw Ah Sing, a Chinaman, but an ugly, red-eyed, scarlet-haired, crooked beast of an I-jin, grinning at me like a fool."

"Of course you killed him," said Johnnie, with pretended earnestness. "You drew your sword and went for him, and then—"

Kura was too full of *saké* to understand that his new friend was poking fun at him. He thought he was fooling Brackett and using him as a tool, by means of which he could get at his enemy.

"No," he said. "I was, unfortunately, unarmed, but I borrowed a sword and *ko-ka-ta-na* from a friend of mine, who exhibits team of strength in a booth on the main avenue leading toward the Temple of Kuanon, and having done that, I set out to hunt my foe. I knew my game of life was pretty well played, and resolved to die like a true Samurai in ridding my country of one of its enemies. Besides, I felt mad at having that spitball thrown into my eye. It made the people grin at me."

Johnnie smothered his intense desire to laugh, and remarked:

"I know the man who struck you. He is my worst enemy."

"Ah!" cried Kura, offering him a full cup of *saké*. "You know him, do you? Drink this pledge. I swear, when I next meet with him, to take his head in my hands."

This was almost too much, even for such a practical joker as our young friend. However, he contrived to keep his countenance and to swallow the stuff.

"This is the best thing yet," he thought, as he gazed upon Kura's savage face. "It beats all the rags I have ever put up. Just fancy, I am fooling the man who wants to take my head."

The *ronin* little imagined what was passing in his companion's mind. He thought he was bending him like a bamboo.

"Brother," he said, in a low, confidential voice, "you have not yet divulged your honorable name and title."

Brackett, although he had scrawled his signature on Kura's palm, was by far too cautious to give himself away, so he said:

"Brother Kura, my name is Billie Patterson. I am the servant of that mad I-jin who threw the heave-offering in your eye. He is continually getting me into trouble, and I have become a *ronin* in order to get even with him."

"Billie Patterson," murmured Kura, making a memo on a scrap of paper with a tiny brush dipped in India-ink. "I'll remember that as long as I live. What is the name of my never-to-be-too-much-despised enemy?"

"Johnnie Brackett," answered the wag. "He is a great man in America; is celebrated for his tricks. You must look out for him, brother, or he will play a joke on you."

"Will he—ah—will he?" hissed Kura, swallowing another dose of *saké*. "You thank so, eh? I will wager you a pot of rice-brandy he will never serve me another scurvy trick."

"Done!" cried Johnnie. "Suppose we send for the landlord and deposit the value of the liquor with him?"

Kura, who had only a few cash, which he had begged of an old acquaintance, demurred at his new friend's proposition, and murmured:

"You forget I am an ex-Samurai; that my word is as good as my money?"

"Oh, certainly," chuckled his companion; adding, inwardly, in English, "I guess neither are worth anything." Then, once more addressing Kura in Japanese, continued, "My brother, tell me how it came to pass that you did not take that fellow's head?"

"It was thus," said the *ronin*, helping himself to more *saké*. "I found him in the Temple of the Thirty-four Miracles of Kuanon, and attacked him, when a court lady, whom I suppose was in love with the idiot, came in and distracted my cut. I aimed a second blow at him, as he lay across the knees of the god Kuan, and not noticing the latter's outreaching arms, struck them instead of my enemy, and gave myself such a shock that I tumbled backward. The court lady saw this, and rushing at me ere I could recover myself, set upon my chest; then the other red-haired savages, his companions, entered, so I retired, vowing vengeance."

"Now, what do you mean to do?" demanded Johnnie, who could scarcely restrain his merriment.

"I have secured a sword by entering the storehouse of the Temple of the Spring Hill, over there," answered Kura, indicating the Senga-kuji. "This is the *matsuri* (festival) of the glorious Forty-seven, and everybody who can afford it comes out to Taka-na-wa to see the ceremonies, which commence at the hour of the Snake (noon). Now, brother Bil-lee, I want you to watch while I wait here, and when that never-to-be-too-greatly-disgraced beast, Jo-hon-hie Brick-hat, arrives, give me the signal. You know him, while, upon my word, I do not think I could recognize him again!"

The wag looked at Kura's *saké*-swollen features, and replied, as though thinking aloud:

"I don't believe you would! Never mind; I know the fellow as well as any one, and will act as your second. What do you propose to do? He is a guest of the Tenno."

"The?" answered Kura, as solemnly as his *saké*-filled condition would permit. "I have the sword and *ko-ka-ta-na* (dirk) of Oishi Kura-no-Suke, my ancestor, that I just now *sho* (hooked) from the fireproof building in which the relics are kept."

"Is that not thieving?" said Johnnie, with a sly chuckle.

"No!" replied his companion; drinking more *saké*. "It is only recovering what belongs to my family. Those bonzes have no right to keep my ancestors' arms, and to exhibit them to gaping rustics at ten cash a head. Of course I am going for it; for recovering these weapons, and if I am caught will lose my head. Therefore, I desire you will seek out that *Gwai-koku-jin* with the horrible name, and when you see him resting in a nice quiet spot, away from the crowd who will swarm here, come back to me, and I will advance upon him secretly and cut off his head. He shall die *tsu-jiri!*" (Literally, in a dog's place.)

"Why cannot I fix him?" urged the choking wag.

"Because I, as your (hic) elder brother, must first be (hic) avenged!" gravely hiccoughed Kura. "I will cut off Brick-hat's head with the sword of my immortal ancestor, Oishi, and will wash it in the well in which Oishi and the brave Forty-seven washed that of their lord's cowardly enemy; then, after depositing it on the grave of my noble ancestor, we will, in the presence of an admiring crowd, commit *hara-kiri!*" adding, as he sank backward among the cups and kettles, "What better use can we make of our lives? I cannot work, and begging is, nowadays, played out. Yes, we are brothers (hic); you find my enemy, I'll (hic) cut off his head. You will then be revenged on him!"

The frequenters of the wine-shop, who were all ex-Samurai, were used to such boasting, so they applauded the drunken *ronin*, while Johnnie, who was tickled to death with the success of his joke, said to himself:

"You'll have to be a deal smarter and more sober than you are now, you poor visionary! I see the Spirit of Old Japan is a good deal of it the result of want and *saké*. I'll try whether I cannot cure you of both; but this is awfully funny, though! I thought to put up a job on the boys, and that joker, Mr. Nami, and little expected to meet you in this way. I'll serve you a trick that will take the nonsense out of your disordered brain! It's time this *Yamato Damashi* business were played out!"

"Excuse me, *Sama* (my lord)!" whispered the proprietor, advancing to Brackett, upon his hands and knees, for Johnnie had paid liberally. "Your companion will be arrested if he talks like that. Even now there may be spies in the shop!"

Brackett drew some paper money from his sleeve-pocket, and bowing, in Japanese fashion, handed it to the landlord, saying:

"That Samurai is my friend. He has taken too much of your excellent *saké*, but will soon be all right! In his exhilaration he has said some foolish things. You understand, he is one of us! Place him in a private room; I will return, later on, and give you a second reward for attending to him."

The man bowed respectfully, after which Johnnie rose and sauntered into the grounds, which were beginning to be filled with holiday makers.

(To be continued.)

"Through the Heart of Japan" was commenced in No. 471.

Rob Rollalong, the Runaway.

By BRACEBRIDGE HEMYNG,

AUTHOR OF THE "JACK HARKAWAY" AND "DICK LIGHTHEART" STORIES, ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XIII.

JOINING THE CIRCUS.

ROB had been wandering about the woods with Dr. Kedge all the morning, more than ever impressed with the idea that he ought to get away from Staten Island.

A constant fear of Mr. Brewster haunted him, and he feared Vang's treachery, should he know anything about him.

"Leave me here, Kedge," he said. "I want to be alone and think."

"All right," answered Kedge, who went back to the cottage, his hands in his pockets, and whistling for want of thought.

He was away an hour, during which time Bob had fully determined to leave the island that evening.

Delays are proverbially dangerous.

Where to go he knew not, or what would become of him.

Anything was preferable to life on board the school-ship, from all he had heard of it.

He was about to go home to supper, when Kedge burst upon his gaze, looking greatly excited.

"More trouble in camp!" he exclaimed.

"What is it?" said Rob.

"Soft Tommy has cut Vangs with a knife for whipping him, and Vangs will be a cripple all his life."

"Well," said Rob, "it's wrong to rejoice at other's misfortunes; but blow me if I feel sorry!"

"Nor I."

"Any more news?"

"Yes. I'm full of it to-day. Hattie's been and engaged herself to be Vangs's wife when he gets well."

"Who told you that?" asked Rob, looking crestfallen and sad.

"Mrs. Elliot."

"If she said so, it's straight," answered Rob. "Poor Hattie! she'll repent this."

"I'll bet yer."

"I'm done out of my sweetheart, and I'll never look at a girl again."

"Yes, you will. Ain't there as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it?"

"So they say," replied Rob.

There was a pause, and the two boys wended their way slowly homeward.

Home!

The very word was a mockery, for their only home was a ship, and that only so long as they sailed in her.

They were liable to be wrecked or paid off, and the ship laid up, when they would have to find another home.

"I'm off to-night, Kedge," said Rob.

"Here's a katydid who'll sail with you," said Kedge.

"Confound the luck! My luck's out, I think. Who'd have thought Hattie would have been such a goll darned little fool?"

"Ah, my boy," said Kedge, who fancied he knew something about women, "girls are all a fraud. They are gay deceivers; there's no trusting them, for they'll ax you all the time."

"That's so," replied Rob, grating his teeth. "Why didn't Tommy strike for the heart? That's what I want to know."

They reached the cottage.

"Hi, Rob," said Mrs. Elliot. "There's a friend of yours inside."

"Who's that, aunty?"

"Ben Arlick, from Amboy."

"Hey! that's news," said Rob.

He hastened inside and saw Hen seated at the table, eating something that Mrs. Elliot, with her usual hospitality, had prepared for him and a friend who was with him.

The friend was a middle-aged man, stout and weather-beaten.

He was strongly built, and his face had a devil-may-care expression, which was he gleaned by many a scar he had received in fight and tussle.

"How are you, Rob?" said Hen. "Let me introduce my friend Bully Bill. We're having a day in the country."

"Glad to know you, sir," replied Rob.

"That's me," said Bully Bill.

"Why didn't you come earlier?" asked Rob, "and I could have shown you about."

"We hadn't time, and we'll have to be off again directly, because of the circus. Bix must be attended to."

"The circus?" echoed Rob.

"Yes. I've joined the circus gang. Got tired of selling books and papers, candy and peanuts."

"Well, did you ever hear the beat of that? What next?" said Rob, who was fairly astonished.

"I'm only stable-boy at present," continued Hen. "Bully Bill's stable-boss; he can drive eight-in-hand, and our traveling bolivant loves him. Don't he, Bill?"

"Oh! I'm high on elephants," replied Bill.

"I'm learning some tricks," Hen went on, "and shall appear in the arena before long."

"Does it pay?"

"Not at present. We live. We breathe. But I wanted to see the world and have some fun, so when I got acquainted with Bill and he offered me a posish, I took it."

"What's circus in it?"

"Murray's. Bang up, I tell you," answered Hen Arlick.

"Where are you now?" queried Rob.

"Over at Rockaway. We appear there to-night. Amboy to-morrow. Ever seen our bills?"

"No."

"We've got a strong company. Jimmy Cook and Woodar Cook. Leon and Walker. Miss Eva and Mlle. Adelaide. Ain't she a spanker? Look there, my Katy-did."

Hen drew a bill from his pocket and read it wonderingly.

Like most boys, he went wild over a circus, and was quite entranced with the prospect of seeing all the inside track of this one, through the instrumentality of his friend.

The principal attraction of the evening was "Dick Turpin," a drama illustrating the principal events of the career of this distinguished highwayman.

This is what the bill said about it:

SYNOPSIS OF INCIDENTS:

The horse fair—The distinguished highwayman—The beadle's proclamation—*Ring de bell, Sammy! Yes, fa-der*—Buying a horse—Meeting of Tom King and Turpin—Turpin's ode to his mare.

"Look, look how that eyeball glows bright as a brand!
That neck proudly arches, those nostrils expand;
Mark that wide flowing mane, of which each silky tress
Might adorn prouder beauties—though none like Black Bess.

"Mark that skin, sleek as velvet and dusky as night,
With its jet undisfigured by one lock of white;
That throat branched with veins, prompt to charge or caress;
Now is she not beautiful, Bonny Black Bess?"

The public house—Robbery of the travelers—Their departure—Discovery of Tom King—His capture—His dream realized—"I fall by the hand of my best friend"—Death of Tom King—Fight between Dick Turpin and the constable—Commencement of the flight to York—Bess is now on her stride, and Dick is happy—Happy! He is maddened, enraptured, furious, intoxicated as with wine—His blood spins through his veins—Winds round his heart—mounts to his brain!—Away! away! he is wild with joy—Hail, cot, tree, tower, glade, mead, waste or woodland are seen, passed, left behind and vanish as in a dream—Motion is scarcely perceptible—It is an impulse—Volition—Hornsey turnpike—LEAPING THE GATE—Arrival of officers—
The roadside inn—Turpin and his mare—Off again—He trembles with excitement and Bess trembles under him—The emotion is transient—On, on they fly—The torrent leaping from the crag, the bolt from the bow, the air-cleaving eagle, thoughts themselves, are scarce more winged in their flight—The gypsies' encampment—Struggles of Turpin and his mare.

Away, away, thou matchless steed! Yet brace fast thy sinews, hold thy breath, for the goal is not yet attained.

"But forward, on they go,
High snorts the straining steed,
Thick pants the rider's laboring breath
As headlong on they speed,
The sight renewed my courser's feet,
A moment staggering feebly fleet,
A moment, with a faint, low neigh,
She answered, and then fell;
With gasps and glazing eyes she lay,
And reeking limbs immovable,
Her first and last career was done."

SHE FALLS—SHE DIES—ARRIVAL OF OFFICERS—FLIGHT AND GRAND TABLEAU—BLACK BESS BORNE FROM THE RING.

An imposing spectacle, and most wonderful exhibition of horse-training in the world.

All arranged under the personal superintendence of Mr. Murray.

This was what the bill said, and the author retained by the circus proprietor had "spread" himself considerably in the effort.

Sensation writing could go further go.

Rob was fairly carried away at the brilliant prospects. "Could you get me on?" he said.

"It's Bully Bill's funeral, not mine," answered Hen.

Rob looked inquiringly at the stable-boss.

"We do want an elephant-boy, and that's a fact," said Bill.

"What's he got to do, sir?" asked Rob, eagerly.

"Wal," said Bill, solemnly, "he's got to let the animal roll on him when he get's up. It's a playful sort off cuss; and then he's got to be tossed up on its trunk and caught on its tusks. He must stand on his head on the elephant's back and ride through the streets as an advertisement, and——"

"Now, sir, you're joking me. I can see you're foolin'."

"Not I. Ask Hen if there's a word of a lie in it."

"Not a word," replied Hen.

"I'll tell you what I'll do, lad," said Bully Bill. "I'll engage you at a dollar a week, and 'find you,' to do odd chores."

"Thank you, sir. I am so much obliged," said Rob, joyfully.

Kedge had come in and overheard this conversation.

"I'll go to sea again!" he exclaimed.

"Sorry to part with you, Kedge," said Rob. "But I must do something, and the chance was so tempting."

"You owe me no excuse," replied Kedge

But Rob saw he was hurt at his desertion of him, and he felt sorry for it.

However, he had to look out for himself, and, like a drowning man, he clutched at the first straw which presented itself.

"You've seen a deal of life, sir, I should think?" said Rob.

"I'll bet you!" replied Bully Bill. "I've been in Nevada, mining and running a paper. I've worked in the Pennsylvania mines. They know me at Pottsville, I reckon. I've hunted, trapped and scouted, and I'm such a natural-born vagabond that I can't settle down, and I'm goin' around now with a circus."

"Why don't you get married, sir, and——" Bill interrupted him almost fiercely.

"Married!" he said. "I've been married, and the woman played me false; but she died, and so did he!"

There was the romance of a life-time in this answer.

"Life out West is pretty good," continued Bill, the soul-storm passing away and his features calming down a little.

"So I should think," said Hen. "You were going to tell me about the death of your friend Ben, at Lick's Flat. Won't you do it now?"

"It's a sad tale. I put it in rough verse," replied Bully Bill. "Here it is, listen:

"BEN OF LUCK'S FLAT.

"Once I was living 'way up on Luck's Flat—
That was the name the miners had given 'he place;
They were wild enough, and rough, too, at that,
For you seldom or ever saw a woman's face.

"Ben was a sociable sort of a cuss;
He used to write for a paper I edited.
Sometimes his stuff was good, oftener wuss,
And smell was the sum with which he was credited.

"Our paper, friends, didn't amount to much;
We issued in a mining town in Nevada,
And the subscriptions of the boys were such
That they scarcely sufficed to fill up our larder.

"It was a struggle for paper and print,
There's no sorter use in telling a lie on it,
We knew that we were not making a mint,
Though we managed by luck not to die on it.

"And this brings me back to Ben, the old cuss,
Who was heavy on rye when you'd give it him;
Somehow he couldn't keep out of a muss,
And the sight of a bar most always would rivet him.

"The boys liked Ben, for he drank all the time,
And in drinking, I guess, took the lead of 'em.
He'd hyst in the rum till he'd spend every dime,
And never was known to draw a bead on 'em.

"One day a Yank came and staked out a claim—
He was an ugly and mussy sort of a chap—
Hogginson was all he gave as a name,
And he was a most wonderful fellow to lap.

"The first week he was up he challenged Ben
Which could drink the most, the loser pay for the rye.
Our Ben licked him all into fits, but then
The poor fellow only came to the office to die.

"He asked me to give him a subject,
As he felt heavy on writing leaders that day;
But before he'd got the pen in his hand
I could see that his strength was fast fading away.

"'Morals of miners! that's good!' he exclaimed;
'I'll star that quicker nor lightnin', you see;
I've lived among them, boss, and I be blamed"—
Here he staggered and exclaimed, 'What is the matter with me?'

"He rolled back and fell on the floor, kerchunk;
What was the matter? I could have told him, sure pop;
He'd cashed in his checks and had his last drunk;
The trouble with him was, he did not know when to stop.

"The boys clubbed together and buried him;
The paper didn't seem to sell much after that;
(Half couldn't read), they'd bought it 'cos of Ben,
And when he died I had to clear out of Luck's Flat."

Mrs. Elliott and Hattie had entered the cottage while Bully Bill was reciting his rough verses, which, however, were not devoid of pathos, and they were much interested.

"What a sorrowful tale!" said Mrs. Elliott.

"It's all that, ma'am," replied Bill. "It made my eyes turn gray and my hair weep when I wrote that verse; but we see some strange things out in Nevada."

"I don't doubt you, sir," replied the widow.

"Once I saw a man break his neck by falling from a rope, and there wasn't a doctor in the place who could set it for him."

"I suppose he was hanged," said Hattie.

"You're a smart girl, my dear," answered Bill, "for that's just what was the trouble with that filibuster."

"Time to go," said Hen, looking at the clock.

Bully Bill rose.

"Thank yer for me, ma'am," he said. "If yer come to our circus, ask for me and I'll give yer a free pass.

Rob also rose to go, and wished his aunt good-by.

"Where are you going in such a hurry?" she asked.

"Over the water. If I'm asked for, don't give me away."

"Why?"

"I can't tell you now. Promise me, auntie."

Mrs. Elliott made the required promise willingly, and then Rob turned to Hattie.

"I know you have gone back on me," he said; "but if you can't do me any good, don't do me any harm."

"Oh, I won't let on about you," replied Hattie.

"Thank you. In return for your kindness, I'll give you a bit of advice. Vangs is a villain."

"What?" she ejaculated.

"I say it again. Vangs is a villain. Beware of him."

"Oh, you're jealous."

"Not I."

"If you are, you needn't try to insult and pain me."

Saying this, Hattie rushed into an inner room and began to cry.

"Rob, you oughter know better," said the widow. "I didn't think it of you."

"It's true, auntie. I sailed with him. He set fire to the ship, killed the captain, and tried to murder me."

"To go where?"

"To sea again, I guess."

"Continue!" cried Mr. Brewster. "After all my trouble, I am too late—skunked! The young rascal must have got wind of my coming. A constable will be here presently with a warrant for his arrest for trying to murder me. He will watch your house, and if you have told me a lie I'll have you punished; d'ye hear?"

"Now, see here," said the widow, "I've stood a great deal from you, and if you don't clear out from my grounds I'll fire a pail of water over you."

Seeing that he had gone a little too far with his bullying, he deemed it only prudent to beat a retreat, which he did, foaming with rage.

He would have given the world to capture Rob, and he had fully expected to do so.

His was one of those narrow, petty minds, which are always brooding over revenge for real or fancied injuries.

"Be off. You're too high-toned for me!" shouted the widow.

He needed no further bidding, and soon made himself scarce.

It was a long time before Rob knew what a narrow escape he had had. But when he did, he laughed at Brewster's discomfiture.

The man, however, was a determined enemy, and Rob had not heard or seen the last of him, his very defeat on this occasion making him all the more bitter and venomous against the poor boy, who, in the first instance, had not intended to injure him.

CHAPTER XIV.

SCENES IN THE CIRCUS.

IT did not take the little party long to arrive at the mammoth circus.

The huge tent was pitched in a field, and a large crowd of idlers were standing about.

Already a few had entered and taken their places, though the majority of the audience had not yet arrived.

"Hen," exclaimed Bill, "I shall want you with the horses. You, Rob, and your friend Kedge can pass in."

"Can't I make myself useful in some way, sir?" asked Rob, who was anxious to ingratiate himself with his new employer.

"I don't know what you can do, unless you take a stick and just walk round the tent to keep out the deadheads."

"What are they?"

"Those who want to come in without payin'."

"Boys, you mean?"

"And men, too."

"I shouldn't think men would be so mean," said Rob.

"Oh, yer don't know the world," said Bill. "There are some men so all-fired mean that they won't die. They only walk around to save funeral expenses."

Rob laughed.

"Where's a stick?" he asked.

"Take mine," answered Bill, handing him a thick piece of roughly-cut, unvarnished hickory.

Rob grasped the stick, and Bill pressed them in at the entrance, while he and Hen Arlick went to a tent in the rear, where the horses were kept.

It was time to saddle and bridle them, as the performance would soon commence, and the star artistes, who composed the company, were apt to use strong language if they were kept waiting.

Kedge took a seat near the music, which began to play, and Rob walked round the tent.

For some time no one attempted to sneak in.

At length he saw the canvas raised and a head appeared. Down came the stick on the head of the intruder.

"No, you don't," said Rob.

"Oh, good land!" cried a voice. "That's my head, young fellow, and I want you to know it."

"Get out, or I'll give you another knock."

The head, however, was a tough one, and its owner was a determined man, for he protruded his shoulders, and was evidently resolved to come in.

Bang!

The stick hit him a second time.

Now the head and shoulders retreated, while a smothered curse arose on the outside.

Rob had only caught a hasty glimpse o the face, and it seemed to him it was a familiar one.

"I ought to know that phiz," he exclaimed. "You can bet I ought."

Without hesitation he determined to make sure.

Crawling under the canvas, he got outside.

"Horrour! hurrooh! See it to him!" cried some boys who had watched the scene. "No money, no show. We paid our stamps to see the circus; why shouldn't he? Give him a Fourth of July ovation!"

Rob's eyes were a little dazzled at first.

He had just come out of the naphtha-flaring scene inside the tent, and it took him half a minute to get used to the semi-darkness which reigned outside.

But after some steady gazing this is what he saw:

A man sitting on the ground, well-dressed, by his side his hat, one hand pressed to the side of his head, the blood trickling down his forehead and left cheek from a wound.

The wound had clearly been inflicted by Rob.

He was right in his conjecture.

The features of the man were painfully familiar to him.

It was Mr. Brewster.

Rob had by accident put his head, as it were, into the lion's mouth.

It seemed strange that a person in Mr. Brewster's circumstances should try to enter a circus without paying.

But that was the character of the man.

He would prosecute, with the utmost rigor of the law, a poor boy who stole his cherries, h apples or his pears, because he was thus prevented from making a few cents by the sale of them.

ROB ROLLALONG, THE RUNAWAY.—"'OFFICER,' EXCLAIMED MR. BREWSTER, 'DO YOUR DUTY.' BUT WHEN THE OFFICER TOUCHED ROB HE STARTED UP. 'HANDS OFF!' HE CRIED. 'YOU ARE MY PRISONER,' REPLIED THE OFFICER. 'SHOW ME YOUR WARRANT.'"—SEE PAGE 203.

"Oh, good land! But you're joking, sure."

Rob had quitted the cottage, but he left a disagreeable impression on the widow's mind, which all Vangs's money was not able to remove.

Kedge was, with Bully Billy and Hen Arlick, outside. "Going with us?" asked Rob.

"Ya-a," replied Kedge. "I'll go over the ferry with you, take to the circus, and then I'll make my way to York to look for a bark."

"Good enough," replied Rob.

They all walked to the depot together.

Scarcely had they gone than Mr. Brewster, who had sailed up the pond in a little yacht he had, approached the widow's cottage.

"You are the Widow Elliott, I believe?" he exclaimed, in his usual overbearing manner.

"Yes, sir; that's my name," she replied.

"Do you know a gentleman named Vangs living hereabouts?"

"Quite well. He has just bought the Dell House, hard by; but he is very sick and cannot receive visitors just now, as I know, having been up there this afternoon."

"I don't want to see him," answered Brewster, rudely.

"What is you pleasure, then?"

"You have some relations in Amboy?"

"Yes; the Rollalongs."

"That is the name. Your nephew, Rob, is staying with you. Don't deny it. I am informed by Mr. Vangs that such is the fact; though why he should interest himself in my affairs, and give me this information, I am at a loss to imagine. However, it is very welcome, as I want to lay my claws on that boy. Widow, produce Rob Rollalong."

"I can't, sir."

"You can't!" said Brewster.

"No, sir. It is impossible."

"Don't trifle with me, woman. I have the law on my side—the law; do you hear?"

"The boy left my house to-day, sir."

"Left!"

Mr. Brewster looked quite ill.

The news seemed to have disconcerted him greatly.

"Yes, sir," continued the widow. "He took the alarm at something, and left in a hurry."

YOUNG PICKWICK'S SCHOOLDAYS.—"'I LOVE YOU WITH ALL MY 'EART!' CRIED SNAGG, AS HE HELD FORTH THE ROSE. 'I ACCEPT THIS TRIBUTE OF AFFECTION.'"—SEE PAGE 206.

Can it be wondered at, then, that he would try to save a quarter by crawling in under the canvas of the circus-tent?

When a person is mean his meanness creeps out in a hundred different ways.

Mr. Brewster was more than half stunned by the blows which Rob, in the performance of his duty, had given him.

For a moment Rob did not know what to do.

Should he hit him again, and render him perfectly insensible? No!

He had his enemy in his power, and could do it easily.

A moment's reflection showed him that this would be cowardly.

Should he run away?

If he did so he would lose the employment he had just obtained, and he did not want to do that.

It was a difficult position to be placed in.

He did not know what to do.

Tears of vexation stood in his eyes.

While he was laboring in a sea of doubt and perplexity Mr. Brewster came to himself.

"Who hit me!" he asked, looking round dubiously.

"I did!" replied Rob.

"What for?"

"You tried to dead-head the circus."

"Oh, yes; I remember. Who are you? I know your voice. You are Rob Rollalong."

"Yes, sir."

"What are you doing here?"

"I'm a sort of odd help at the circus," said Rob. "See here, Mr. Brewster, you licked me for hooking your cherries. I didn't mean to hurt you when you set the dog on me. It's some time ago now. You've scared me away from home, and I'm trying to get an honest living."

"Ah! oh!" grunted Mr. Brewster.

"You're well fixed, sir, and you don't know what it is to be hunted about, looking for work."

"I don't, eh?"

"No, sir. You've got your own house and lot."

"I worked for it when I was young," replied Mr. Brewster; "and I didn't steal other people's fruit when I was a boy, nor did I get a living firing people out of circuses. A cent was a cent to me. I took care of the cents, and the dollars took care of themselves."

"I've been to sea, and I'll go to sea again, sir, if you'll only let me alone," urged Rob.

NICHOLAS MURPHY, THE WINNER OF THE O'LEARY BELT FOR THE LONG-DISTANCE CHAMPIONSHIP OF AMERICA.—SEE PAGE 209.

"I won't let you alone, boy."

"What do you want to do with me?"

"You'll know as soon as I can get a hold of you."

"Now don't you suppose I'd be a poor, miserable sucker," said Rob, "to let you do as you like?"

"How can you help yourself?"

"See this stick?"

"Well?"

"I'll hit you over the head again with it if you don't promise to let me go?"

"Hit me!"

"Yes; why shouldn't I? Better break your head than be sent to the school-ship."

"Ah! oh!" said Mr. Brewster, rising to his feet. "The school-ship is the best place for boys like you. There you get discipline. There is nothing like strict discipline, hard work, and hard fare for you and your companions."

Rob raised his stick.

"Let up on that, and promise you'll not hunt me about any more, or I'll knock the stuffin' out of you!" he exclaimed.

"Hit me! You dare to hit me!" cried Mr. Brewster, retreating in alarm.

"Promise, or you'll see what I dare do!"

"Boy, you're crazy!"

"No, I'm not, either!" answered Rob.

"Help, help! Murder! mur—mur—der!" cried Mr. Brewster.

"Oh, you want to make it red-hot for me, do you?" said Rob.

Several people who were lounging about came up.

Rob thought it was time to run away, and he did so; but before he went he hit his enemy over the shins, bringing him to his knees as naturally as if he was saying his prayers and thanking heaven for being a good man.

Rob ran round to the stables, leaving Mr. Brewster to tell his own tale as he thought fit to the bystanders.

He saw Hen Artlick, who was leading out a horse for one of the star riders.

"Good-by, Hen!" he exclaimed.

"Where are you off to?" asked Hen.

"Brewster's spotted me."

"Never!"

"He has, though, and I'm going to tramp it up to York. Tell Kedge, will you, that I'll be walking up and down South Street to-morrow evening, and he can meet me."

"I'm sorry for this."

"It can't be helped. Thank Billy Bill for me."

"I will. Wish you luck, Rob."

A voice exclaimed:

"Hurry up with that horse!"

Hen had to go along with the fiery steed, who was impatiently pawing the ground, and Rob, alone and cast on the world again, left the stable-tent by another door.

As he did so he heard loud exclamations.

"He went in here, I tell you!" said the voice of Mr. Brewster. "Hunt him out. I'll have him arrested. Five dollars to the man who catches that boy!"

Rob put his fingers to his nose in token of derision, and ran swiftly away in the darkness.

The music had just commenced to play, and the melodious strains rang in his ears.

"Confound old Brewster!" he muttered. "I wish I'd seen the show."

But prudence restrained him, for he felt sure that his enemy would be on the lookout for him, and he would have a poor chance of escape should he be seen. He was taking one last, reluctant look at the great big tent when a boy called him by name.

"Hello, Rob! Got back?"

He looked around, and saw one of his old companions in Amboy.

"Yes, I'm back," he replied; "but I'm like a bird on the wing, Charley."

"How's that?"

"Old Brewster's spotted me."

"Is that so? Well, I guess you'll be wise to look out right smart, for he swears he'll have you the first chance."

"I know it," replied Rob, sorrowfully.

"Have you been home?"

"Not yet."

"My!" exclaimed the boy Charley, as if in surprise.

Rob caught his look, and felt alarmed.

"Say, Charley," he asked, "what's wrong at home?"

"Haven't you heard?"

"Not a word. Who should I hear from? Tell me, quick!"

"I thought you might have met somebody; that's all."

"Tell me!" cried Rob, impatiently.

"Your mother's sick."

"Since when?"

"Oh, this ever so long—a fortnight, I should think, and I did hear that the doc says it's a hard case."

"Is it so bad as that?"

"Yes. She wants to see you very much, and your father was about with the boys, asking if we'd heard anything of you, and offering five dollars for news."

"Is—is she dying, do you think?" inquired Rob, in a choking voice.

"That's what's the matter, I'm afraid; but I can't stop talking now, Rob. We've got to take the show in, if I beat over it."

"Of course. Good-by, Charley."

"Good-by!"

The boy turned away to the pay-place, gave in his stamp, and was soon occupying a seat in the crowded circus-tent. As for Rob, he was miserable.

But no longer undecided.

He knew where to go now, for his place was by his mother's side, when that mother, who had always been so good and kind to him, was suffering and in pain.

He cared little for Brewster and what he could do to him.

At that moment he would have dared death itself to be by his mother's bed, where she was longing for his presence.

Perhaps she was even then dying, and with all the haste he could make he would be too late.

This thought was agonizing.

The road between Rahway and Perth Amboy was well known to him, as he had traveled it often enough.

So he started off at a quick pace in the direction of what had once been his happy home.

"Poor Rob!"

He felt sick at heart now, and felt sorry that he had gone away, as it would have been better to stay and brave the affair out, though at the time he firmly believed he had accidentally killed Mr. Brewster.

It did not take him more than half an hour to reach Amboy.

Darkness had fallen.

The streets of this quiet, old-fashioned, moldy and stagnation-cursed town were deserted.

Rob reached the door of his father's cottage.

It was open.

Old Rollalong was seated as usual in his arm-chair, smoking a pipe. He turned his head as his son entered. "Rob!" said he, in surprise, as he recognized the boy by the light of a kerosene lamp.

"Yes, father!"

"Where have you been?"

"Been to sea, father."

"Do you know your mother's deathly sick?"

"That's what brought me back, father. Where is mother, and how is she now?"

"The doctor is in her bedroom. I've just taken leave of her, Rob."

A deep sob broke from the boy. It was as he feared.

He was almost, if not quite, too late, and he would not for worlds that his beloved mother should die without giving him her blessing.

"She's in there," continued the fisherman, pointing to the door of the room in which the sick woman was lying.

Rob gently opened the door.

The room was tenanted only by the invalid, the doctor, and the nurse.

Rob knew them both.

"I'm glad you're come," said the doctor. "She's been calling for you all the time."

"Is—is she dead, sir?" asked Rob.

"No; she sleeps. But I fear when she awakens she will not last long."

There was a slight movement of the bedclothes.

Mrs. Rollalong's lips opened, and she murmured:

"My boy! my boy! Why is he not here? Will no one bring me my boy?"

Rob rushed to the bed.

He knelt down, and seizing the thin, white hand, which was outside the coverlid, he pressed it fervently to his lips.

"Here I am, mother!" he exclaimed.

"Where?"

"Right here at your side. Do you not know me, mother?"

She turned her eyes upon him, and dimly traced out his features.

"Thank God!" she exclaimed. "I have prayed for this, and He has heard my prayer."

With some difficulty she placed both hands upon his head.

"May the good Lord bless you, Rob," she continued, "and make you a happy and prosperous man."

Then her eyes closed and she breathed heavily. Rob remained kneeling.

Some minutes passed, and nothing was heard save the ticking of a clock on the mantel.

Suddenly the dying woman's face was convulsed with horror.

"Who says so?" she cried. "Who dare say that the line of his life is cut short?"

Rob listened with horrified attention.

"She is raving," said the doctor.

"Away! away! You are a lying spirit! How dare you say that in the sixth year from now he is to die? What has he done that his life should not last? Avaunt! You lie! My boy shall live!"

This effort exhausted her, and she fell back on the pillow, struggling for breath.

"That was the last spasm," said the doctor.

For nearly an hour the poor woman battled with death, growing weaker every moment.

The singular words she had uttered seemed to the nurse and the doctor but the ravings of a diseased brain.

To Rob they had a peculiar significance.

It seemed to him that she had seen a vision with her dying eyes, in which his fate had been revealed to her.

Certainly it was very strange that in her last moments she should speak of him, and say that he had but six years to live.

Six years!

That was the period assigned to him by Vanga, who boasted that his skill in palmistry never misled him.

It was impossible that Mrs. Rollalong could in any way have heard of this weird prediction.

The perspiration rolled down Rob's face; for the moment he forgot the desperate and critical state of his mother in the contemplation of his own misery.

He was recalled to himself by the doctor, who raised him gently from his kneeling position.

"It is all over," he said.

"What do you mean?" replied Rob.

"Your mother is dead."

"Dead!"

He could scarcely believe this true, but when he saw the nurse drawing the sheet over the poor pale face, the solemn truth forced itself upon him.

He burst into tears.

The doctor considerately led him from the room, and he was preceded by his father, who had held his wife's hand in his till the last.

"Good-day," said the doctor. "Bear up. This is a great blow to both of you, but Heaven is merciful."

Father and son were left alone together.

"No man ever had a better wife," said the fisherman; "we always find out people's good qualities when they're gone, and I never knew how good she was till I lost her."

"She was always good to me, father," replied Rob.

"Shall you stay home now, Rob?"

"How can father, when Brewster's after me?"

"I guess I can square that affair with him," said the fisherman.

COTTON MANUFACTURE.—A PRIMITIVE HINDOO LOOM.—SEE PAGE 206.

A footstep was heard on the threshold.

"Can you?" said the new-comer, who had overheard the remark.

It was none other than Brewster himself.

When Rob left him at the circus, he concluded that the boy would be most likely to go home and pay a visit, if ever so short a one, to his father and mother, nor was he wrong in this conjecture.

When Rob recognized his persecutor, his heart sank within him.

All his worst fears were realized.

What could he do?

His first impulse was to run away, but when he cast his eyes to the door, he was astonished to see a policeman, whom Brewster had picked up on the way and requested to accompany him.

Escape was cut off.

"Ah! Brewster," said Mr. Hollalong, "I'm glad to see you, though you've come at a sad time."

"How?"

"The wife's dead. Rest her soul. She passed away not long ago, and Rob was just in time to receive her blessing; the shock has been almost too much for me. I'm like a man in a dream."

"That's bad," replied Brewster. "I'm sorry for you, neighbor."

"It's lucky Rob's come back," continued the fisherman. "He's been to sea. The voyage was a short one, and it will be a kind of comfort for the poor boy to go to the funeral."

"He'll go to no funeral."

"What's that?"

"I mean to have him arrested to-night."

"On the old charge?"

"Yes. You don't suppose I have forgotten it, do you?"

"Come; come, you're joking, neighbor," exclaimed the fisherman. "You don't mean what you say."

"Don't I, by gosh?"

"You haven't the heart to take that boy to-night, and his mother lying dead in the house?"

"I've got to take him when I can find him. The young varmint's as slippery as an eel. If I were to leave him here he would be off the first chance, and I should be cheated out of my revenge."

"You're a man and he's a boy."

"What difference does that make? He stabbed me, didn't he? and I've got a warrant for his arrest."

"What do you intend to do with him?"

"Make an application to the judge to have him sent to the school-ship till he's learnt how to behave himself," answered Brewster.

Old Hollalong put another chew in his mouth.

"See here, neighbor," he said, after a pause; "I've got a little money, and I'll put up ——"

"You won't do anything of the sort," interrupted Brewster. "I don't want money."

"What, then?"

"Revenge," he hissed through his teeth. "Look at my head. You can see my hair clotted with recent blood. That's what he did to-night. Am I likely to forget that, while I'm smarting with pain? Not much. I'll make him dance before I've done with him."

"Well, if that's the case, you're all people say you are."

"What do they say I am?"

"A brute."

"If that's the reputation I've got, I'll act up to it in this instance, and don't you forget it," replied Brewster.

He advanced to the door.

"Officer," he exclaimed, "do your duty."

The policeman approached Rob and touched him on the shoulder.

During this conversation, which so nearly interested him and concerned his future career, Rob had remained entirely passive.

He was crushed down beneath a load of grief which would have overcome one older than him.

His dead mother occupied his thoughts more than his own position.

But when the officer touched him he started up.

"Hands off!" he cried.

"You are my prisoner," replied the officer.

"Show me your warrant."

[To be continued.]

"Rob Hollalong," was commenced in No. 673.

Young Pickwick's Schooldays.

CHAPTER XLV.

(Continued from page 196.)

AWAY hurried the Diddler. As he was going round to the front he met Fitzsham, Tinkle and young Pickwick, who had come out to get a breath of fresh air.

"Halloa!" they cried, as they caught sight of him; "here you are again."

"Yes, here we are!" exclaimed the Diddler, buoyantly. "Well, got through Othello, you see—liked it, eh?"

"First rate. You did it splendidly."

"You've regularly fogged the doctor and Puckle," said Fitzsham. "They fancied there was such an astonishing likeness between you and the great Nobbler."

"Ha, ha! strange that—very!" grinned the Diddler.

"Ha, ha, ha!" joined in the rest.

"What a jolly lark it was when you knocked Iago into the big drum!" roared Tinkle.

"And when you turned from blue to yellow," laughed young Pickwick. "Ho, ho, ho! it was glorious."

"Must have been," modestly admitted the Diddler. "But something better coming," he added, with a knowing twinkle of his peculiar eye.

"What is it?"

"Splendides not put in an appearance."

"Oh," exclaimed the listeners, in a tone of great disappointment, "then there'll be no clown."

"Oh, yes, there will."

"What then? Are you going to do clown as well as Othello?" they asked.

"No."

"Who is?"

"Swags."

"Swags!" exclaimed the boys, in astonishment.

"Yes; ha, ha! Nice fat clown!" grinned the Diddler.

"Ho, ho, ho!" grinned the rest.

"He'll never be able to do it," said Tinkle, after a moment.

"Must—no alternative—all settled," exclaimed the Diddler.

"Poor old Swags; he'll go to sleep."

"No, he won't," said the Diddler; "take care of that—stir him up with long and sharp pin. Where is he?"

"In the box," returned Fitzsham; "he wanted to come out to buy some nuts, but the doctor wouldn't permit it."

"Must get him out somehow, dear boy—time getting on—manager in a fever—come on."

With this they all returned to the theatre.

When they entered the box, Swags was sitting dolefully in a corner.

He had just woke up from a nap, and was terribly hungry.

At this moment the fat boy observed the Diddler beckoning to him.

The actions of the latter were very expressive.

Swags understood perfectly from them that he was to go out with him, and that if he did there would be something to eat.

Then, said Swags, and he quietly made his way to the box-door and slipped out.

"Bravo Swagy!" said the Diddler, encouragingly; "managed it capitally, old fellow—come on."

"I'm very much obliged to you for getting me out," said the fat boy, gratefully; "I can get something to eat now."

"Yes, all right," returned the Diddler, as he took him by the arm and hurried him down the steps; "this way, dear boy."

As soon as he reached the open air he was about to make a bolt to the nearest ginger-bread-stall.

But the Diddler checked him.

"Not yet, Swagy, dear boy," he said, as he collared him.

"But I want some nuts; I'm starving," wailed Swags, with tears in his eyes.

"Feel for you deeply—do indeed—but can't stop now—business first, nuts after," returned the Diddler.

He hauled the fat youth along until they arrived at the stage-door.

"Now, then, in we go," he said.

"Where are we going?" asked Swags.

"Inside—on stage—dressing-room—act pantomime."

"P-p-pant-o-mime?" gasped the fat youth.

"Yes—great treat in store for you—you going to perform clown."

"What, me?" exclaimed Swags, his eyes opening to twice their usual size with astonishment; "me play clown?"

"Yes, dear boy—you," was the cheerful reply.

"Oh, dear, I can't act clown," faltered Swags.

"Oh, yes, you can—easiest thing in world," the Diddler assured him; "beautiful dress—all spots—paint face—flake white—vermilion cheeks—wig—three tails on your head—look lovely."

"I shall make a mull of it, I know I shall; and besides, I want something to eat."

"So you shall—much as you like—very soon."

"Shall I?" asked Swags, licking his lips.

"Yes—all kinds of luxuries—ducks, sucking-pigs, saveloys, legs of mutton, and so on."

"Are there any saveloys and legs of mutton?" Swags inquired, eagerly.

Those strings of 'em—fish, carrots, turnips, cabbages, dead cats, etc."

"Don't care about dead cats," replied Swags, shuddering slightly.

"As you like—take choice—come on, dear boy."

They entered, and the first person they met as they gained the stage was Mr. Jinks, who was waiting for them in much anxiety.

"Have you succeeded?" he asked.

"All right—here is the best clown in the world," responded the Diddler; "allow me—introduce pupil—the great Boster."

The manager gazed at Swags with evident delight.

"He is a buster," he said, admiringly, after a moment. "What a figure for clown!"

"Splendid! Togs all ready?"

"Quite; you'll find them in the dressing-room."

The Diddler hurried Swags thither at once.

In spite of the novel position in which the fat youth found himself, he could not forget the fact that he was hungry, and in order to pacify him a bag of gingerbread-nuts was sent for.

His cravings being somewhat appeased, he allowed himself to be dressed.

During this operation he emptied the bag and then fell asleep.

The Diddler did not regret this, as it enabled him to make up his face in a thorough and effective manner.

The manager came in just as this was accomplished.

"Looks a perfect picture, doesn't he?" said the Diddler, enthusiastically; "beat Joey Grimaldi—hollow."

"His appearance is certainly in his favor," admitted Mr. Jinks; "but he seems very drowsy. I hope he hasn't been—a—a—imbibing."

"Imbibing? Oh, dear, no—teetotaller—strict—assure you—just forty winks—nothing more—way he's got—wake up presently—astonish you all."

"I suppose he won't want to go asleep during the pantomime?"

"Not he," returned the Diddler; "take good care of that—wide awake then—lively as kittens."

This satisfied the manager, who hurried away to attend to other matters.

The Diddler remained contemplating the fat youth.

"Swagy no good!" thought the Diddler; "great duffer—it left to himself knock up pantomime—what's to be done?"

Suddenly an idea occurred to him.

"I have it. Do pantaloon myself—keep him on the go—I'll fix a large bradawl on point of stick—stir him up—ha, ha!—no going to sleep then—with bradawl sticking in him."

Having conceived this brilliant plan, he hastily put on the pantaloon's dress, and by the time Swags awoke from his nap he was quite ready.

"Where am I?" asked the fat youth, yawning and looking dreamily around him.

"In dressing-room—just going on stage to play clown."

Swags did not recognize the Diddler in his dress and wig, until the latter made himself known to him.

"Are you going to act, too?" he asked him.

"Of course," he replied; "I'm pantaloon—old 'un, you know—be at your side all through pantomime—keep you going—and so on."

Swags felt relieved at this, and having been supplied with another bag of nuts to compose his nerves, he accompanied his friend on to the stage.

Having placed him in a snug corner, the Diddler went in search of the property man.

From him he received his crutch-stick, which, at his request, was armed at the end with a sharp nail, full an inch long.

When the Diddler returned to his companion he found him fast asleep.

"Wake up, old man!" he cried, as he gave him a prod with his stick.

"Oh!" cried Swags, opening his eyes; "what's the matter? Something's run into me behind."

"Pantomime commenced," returned the Diddler; "come on—pull self together."

"What am I to do when I get on to the stage?" asked Swags, in a doleful tone.

"Cry 'Here we are again!'—turn toes in—make faces at audience—uglier the better—somersault, if you can—kick old 'un—that's me—take clap, and so on," the Diddler explained, hastily.

"But I can't be turning my toes in and making faces, and taking slaps for over," wailed Swags.

"Trust to me—I'll get you through," said his companion, "if ever at a loss for business—pretend to catch fly—always tells."

"But suppose there's no flies to catch?"

"Make believe, of course," said the Diddler; "catch 'em all alive, oh!"

The opening of the pantomime of "Jack and the Beanstalk" had commenced, and went off with tolerable briskness.

At length the time came for the transformation of the characters.

Harlequin and columbine were already on the stage.

The cue was given for the clown and pantaloon to enter.

"Is it my turn?" asked Swags, who was in a hopeless state of fog.

"Yes; fire away, old man," responded the Diddler; "on we go."

As he spoke, he gave the fat one the full benefit of the nail at the end of his stick.

"Oh, oh!" roared the luckless Swags, as he plunged forward from the wing in sight of the audience; "I've got it again."

The Diddler followed, and gave him a second dig, which moved him a few paces further.

The appearance Swags presented in his clown-dress and with his painted face was so intensely comic that the entire audience roared with laughter.

"Bravo, Spitsides! Bravo!" they shouted.

"Good beginning—keep it up," whispered the Diddler. "Sing out, 'Here we are again!'"

"Here we are again!" gasped Swags, convulsively, putting his hand behind him as the Diddler gave him another deep prod with the spike.

"Turn in toes—make faces—go ahead—kick old un—that's me," were the rapid injunctions he received from his instructor.

Poor Swags made desperate efforts to do as he was told, and though what he accomplished was done in a very unstagy way, it appealed to the spectators as something humorous in the extreme, and their laughter increased.

The fat boy rolled his eyes round in an idiotic manner.

"What are they laughing at?" he asked, in an imbecile manner.

"Pshaw! you donkey!" returned the Diddler, disgusted; "don't flag—keep ball rolling—pretend to catch a fly."

[To be continued.]

"Young Pickwick's Schooldays" was commenced in No. 683.

THE O'LEARY BELT.

SKETCH OF THE FIRST WINNER OF THE TROPHY.

NICHOLAS MURPHY, who has just won at Madison Square Garden, New York, the O'Leary Belt and the Championship of America, was born in Haverstraw, N. Y., and is now only eighteen years of age; height, 5ft. 6in., and weight, 150lbs. The young champion belongs to the Wayne Athletic Club, in the same manner that Hanlan belonged to the organization that bore his name.

In May last, when the boy first took to walking, a club of about thirty members was formed in the village of Haverstraw, with the avowed object of starting him on his career as a walker. This first organization was called the Haverstraw Club, but as Murphy failed twice, the membership fell off, and it became necessary to reorganize. This was done, and the reorganized concern was christened the Wayne Athletic Club. Some thirty members were enrolled, and a fee of $1 per month was charged. This money was paid to Murphy during his training, in order that he might still be able to take care of his old mother, whom he loved fondly. Rather than allow his mother to be subject to the financial vicissitudes of a pedestrian's income, Murphy declared that he would abandon all hope of making a reputation on the track, and stick to pushing a brick-cart, out of which he could make a certain weekly stipend.

It appears that little Nick had, before he became a pedestrian, saved enough money to buy a piece of ground and build his mother the cozy little house in which she now resides with her daughter. Such is the boy's affection for his mother. Though she went over to Madison Square Garden to see him on the track, he was trained not to allow her to speak to Nick, as he was afraid the interview would upset him.

The old lady was much excited at the time, but when it was explained that it was best for her not to speak to her son, she reluctantly consented to go away.

The people of Haverstraw point with pride to the Casino, where, in May last, young Murphy made his first essay as a pedestrian. In the Casino, over a track which contained fifty-five laps to the mile, he made a record of fifty miles in twelve hours.

COTTON MANUFACTURE.

SAMUEL CROMPTON AND THE SPINNING MULE.

SAMUEL CROMPTON was born December, 3d, 1753, of an ancient family, traceable to the time of Henry III. Crompton's parents resided at Firwood, near Bolton, occupying a farm, and, as was the custom of that time, employing their leisure hours in carding, spinning, and weaving. They removed when Samuel was five years old to a portion of the neighboring ancient mansion called Hall-in-the-Wood. The boy was well educated at Bolton; but it is probable that, owing to his mother's exigencies, his little legs became accustomed to the loom almost as soon as they were long enough to touch the treadles." At the age of sixteen years he continued to reside with his mother, occupied at the loom, and attending an evening school at Bolton, where he advanced his knowledge of algebra, mathematics, and trigonometry. For six years previous to the above date the increased demand for fine cottons led to a great scarcity of yarn for weft; and the invention of Kay's fly-shuttle, by doubling the speed of the weaver's operations, disturbed the natural balance between the quantity of yarn spun and the weaver's demand for it.

Such was the scarcity of yarn when, in 1767, Hargreaves invented the jenny. "And two years afterward, when only sixteen years of age, Samuel Crompton spun on one of these machines, with eight spindles, the yarn which he afterward wove into quilting; and thus he was occupied for the five following years." At his solitary loom in the old Hall-in-the-Wood, he became prematurely a thinker; and, debarred from company, he cultivated a taste for music, which led to the first trial of his mechanical skill in making a violin, which he commenced learning to play upon. He was master of Hargreaves's invention, the jenny; and he was personally known to Arkwright, whose reputation as an inventor now rang through Lancashire.

The Hall-in-the-Wood is situated about a mile from Bolton, on elevated, rocky ground, round which sweeps the Bagley brook or river; but few of the fine old trees remain to show that the name of the mansion was once entirely appropriate. The building, of post-and-plaster work, is mostly of the end of the fifteenth century; but the south front and porch are of stone, and the latter bears the date 1648. The dining-hall, and the room in which Crompton worked, now occupied as a bedroom, retain their original handsome windows and small, leaden quarries. Here, in the year 1774, he commenced the construction of the 'spinning machine,' which for many years was known as "the Hall-i'-th'-Wood Wheels." It took him five entire years to mature his improvement, during which he worked entirely alone, with no one in his confidence to whom he could look for sympathy or assistance; and he tells us that he succeeded at the expense of every shilling he had in the world. All this labor was in addition to his regular every-day work; he toiled late and early. His difficulties were great, and the tools which he possessed insufficient for the purpose; but by devoting every shilling he could spare to the purchase of the requisite tools, and aided by his clasp-knife, to which he is said to have been greatly indebted, he at length triumphed. It is related that Crompton and his brother were frequently employed in the orchestra of the Bolton theatre, at thirty-six cents a night; but small as it was, that payment greatly assisted him in procuring the tools which he required for his mechanical operations.

The next appears that Highs, or Hays, a reed-maker at Leigh, took up the plan of attempting to spin by rollers in 1767; and he was assisted in his experiments by Kay, the clock-maker, but with little success. Next appeared Arkwright, who is said to have adopted the plans of Highs and Kay, and the spinning jenny of Hargreaves.

Such was the position of cotton-spinning, when, in 1774, Samuel Crompton commenced the experiments which eventuated in his *hall-in-the-wood wheel*, or 'muslin wheel,' because its capabilities rendered it available for yarn for making muslins; and finally it got the name of the 'mule' from the partaking of the two leading features of Arkwright's machine and Hargreaves's spinning jenny. Crompton's first suggestion was to introduce a single pair of rollers, viz.: a top and a bottom, which he expected would elongate the rove by pressure, like the process by which metals are drawn out, and which he observed in the wire-drawing for reeds used in the loom.

In this he was disappointed; and afterward adopted a second pair of rollers, the latter pair revolving at a slower speed than the former, and thus producing a drawing of one inch to three or four. This was neither more nor less than a modification of Mr. Arkwright's roller-beam. But Crompton assured Mr. Kennedy, his nearest friend, that when he constructed his machine he knew nothing of Arkwright's discovery; and the rudeness of Crompton's machine, mostly of wood, shows that he was not acquainted with Arkwright's superior rollers and fixtures in iron, and their connection by clock-work. Mr. Kennedy says:

"Crompton's first machine contained only about twenty or thirty spindles. He finally put dents of brass reed-wire into his under rollers, and also obtained a fluted roller. But the great and important invention of Crompton was his spindle-carriage, and the principle of the thread having no strain upon it until it was completed. The carriage with the spindles could, by the movement of the hand or knee, recede just as the rollers delivered out the elongated thread in a soft state, so that it would allow of a considerable stretch before the thread had to encounter the stress of winding on the spindle. This was the corner-stone of the merits of his invention."

Just as Crompton had completed his first mule in 1779, and was about to put it to actual work, the Blackburn spinners and weavers, who had previously driven poor Hargreaves from his home, revived their tumults, and destroyed every jenny round Blackburn, except such as had more than twenty spindles. To save his new machine from destruction, Crompton took it to pieces, and concealed the various parts in a loft near the clock in the old Hall. There they remained hid for many weeks; and he dared not put them together again: but in the same year the wheel was completed, and the yarn spun upon it used for fine muslins; and one of the earliest results of this success was Crompton's purchase of a silver watch, out of the wheel's earnings.

In 1780 he married, and the young couple went to reside in a cottage attached to the old Hall; but Crompton continued to occupy one of the large rooms in the mansion, and there operated upon the mule, "with a success which startled the manufacturing world by the production of yarn which, both in *fineness* and *firmness*, had hitherto been unattainable by any means or at any price." Assisted by his amiable young wife, he industriously spun at the Hall, with the greatest possible privacy, small quantities of the much-coveted yarn, producing week after week higher counts and an improved quality, for which he readily obtained his own price. The supply, however, could not satisfy one-hundredth part of the demand; the old Hall was besieged by cunning persons, who came not only to purchase, but also to get at the mystery of the wonderful machine. Admission was denied; when many climbed up to the windows outside by the aid of barrows and ladders to look in at the new machine. Crompton blocked the intruders out with a screen; but one inquisitive seeker concealed himself for some days in a loft, and watched Samuel at work by means of a gimlet-hole bored through the ceiling. Even Arkwright traveled sixty miles to endeavor to discover the secret of the new wheel, which all but eclipsed his water-frame.

Crompton now found it impossible to retain the secret of his machine: "He had no patent, nor the means of purchasing one; when, rather than destroy the mule, he gave it to the public, upon conditions of certain "manufacturing friends" paying him a sum of money, which did not exceed £200. The money received merely sufficed to replace the machine which Crompton had given up; for his time, study and toil he received not a shilling. After the secret had been made public, many persons who had promised subscriptions refused to

pay, and even denounced Crompton as an impostor. This shameful treatment made him, to some extent, a moody and mistrustful man. In the five following years the mills was generally employed for fine spinning throughout the manufacturing districts of England and Ireland, and particularly Scotland. Before 1785 Crompton removed to a farm-house near Bolton; and there, besides farming, he worked secretly at his machine in the upper story of his house.

In 1800 a subscription was opened at Manchester to reward Crompton; but it did not exceed $2,500. With this sum he rented a factory store in Bolton, and there had two mules, with the *power* to turn the machinery. Crompton now toiled onward; he submitted his invention to the Royal Society and the Society of Arts, but by neither was it entertained. He had started the stream of manufacturing prosperity, but no portion of it had reached the poor inventor. In the hope of some remuneration, he visited the manufacturing districts of England, Scotland and Ireland, to ascertain the results of his invention, when he found the number of mule-spindles in use to be 4,600,000, spinning 40,000,000 of pounds of cotton wool in a year. Armed with these data, and a certificate signed by many manufacturing and machine-making firms, Crompton petitioned Parliament for public remuneration, and after much delay, the paltry sum of $2,500 was granted him. In 1825 a memorial was presented to Parliament for a second grant, but without effect. On June 26th, 1677, Crompton died, in his seventy-fourth year, and was followed to the grave by a host of Bolton worthies.

(To be continued.)

SECOND SIGHT,

AS PRACTICED BY ROBERT HELLER, EXPLAINED.

PLAYING-CARDS.

THESE will be found in the sixteenth set, and the order of suits in the eighteenth. We will take the nine of spades as having been presented. The question will be:

"Say, what is this?"

"Can you tell?"

"A playing-card."

"Do you know the suit?"

"Now, then."

"Do" is four, which means spades, and "now" is nine. The cards are told as follows: First, the "playing-card," second, the suit, third, the number of picture. If, after the preliminary question is put and answered, it is an ace, the interlocutor says "right"; if a king, "that's right"; if a queen, "good"; if a jack, "very good."

MONEY.

This will be found classed in the eighth set, the key to which is, "Look at this."

No. 6. of the set is described as a "piece of money," and is always of a less value than a dollar. We will take a silver quarter of the date of 1870. The question is:

"Look at this."

"What is it?"

Ans.—"A piece of money."

Quer.—"Let me know the amount."

"Will you?"

Ans.—"25 cents."

As we know that "Let" is 2 and "Will" 5. If the coin is of this century, only the last two figures are asked; if a prior date, the three last. The question therefore is:

"Look at the date."

"Hurry."

Which would bring the answer 1870. A foreign coin is furnished, say of Rome. The question would be, "Look at this; do you know what it is?" The answer is, "A coin." "What country?" "Italy," as Italy stands sixth in the list of countries, as will be seen by referring to the table. A Mexican dollar will elicit the question, "Look at this, now." "A silver dollar." "Tell me the country." The reply will be Mexico, as that country stands tenth on the list. A Treasury note is presented of the value of $50, the question is, "Look at this; be quick." Answer, "A Treasury note." "Will you tell me the amount; come," which means 5 and 0, or $50—come being a substitute for "hurry." Again, a $2.50 gold piece is presented and the question is as before, "Look at this, will you?" Answer, "A gold piece." "Let me know the amount, won't you; come?"—let, won't and come standing for 250.

OTHER EXAMPLES.

"Pray, what is this?" "Tell me." The answer is a "key," key being the tenth article of the set. Now, in order to tell what kind of a key, these simple words will explain:

"Yes"—a watch-key.

"Well"—a door-key.

"Good"—a sale-key.

"What is here?" "Say?" The answer is a "pipe." Now, to answer what kind of a pipe as above, the words:

"Yes"—a meerschaum pipe.

"Well"—a wooden pipe.

"Good"—a clay pipe.

"Can you see this? Please say?" Answer is a "comb."

"Yes"—a pocket comb.

"Well"—a toilet-comb.

"Good"—a curry-comb.

"Can you see this?" "Are you going to tell?" The answer is "brush."

"Yes"—a hair-brush.

"Well"—clothes-brush.

"Good"—paint-brush.

If an article is presented which is not down in the sets the alphabet will have to be resorted to, and the article spelled out.

HOW IT WAS DONE WITHOUT ASKING QUESTIONS.

As soon as my back was turned to the audience, and a large silk handkerchief thrown over my head, the stool on which I was seated, containing a hollow leg, was placed directly over a hole in the stage. A rubber-pipe was passed up which connected with a tin tube running underneath the stage to the back of the curtain. The assistant saw through a hole in the curtain all articles which were held up, and conveyed the intelligence to me through the pipe. None but large articles, such as hats, umbrellas, sticks, et cetera, were taken, and as this always closed the second-sight part of the performance, it was clear to the minds of all "that it wasn't done by questions," and this concludes the second-sight mystery which so perplexed the world, and which I never would have exposed but for the death of my lamented friend, Robert Heller.

(To be continued.)

THE ROUND TABLE.

PRIZES.

To be Read by all who Send Answers.

FOR A COMPLETE SET OF ANSWERS TO ALL THE ENIGMAS, ETC., IN THIS NUMBER.

For the best and earliest, due allowance being made for the distance of each competitor - $5.00
For the next best - - - - - - - 2.50
For the third in merit and promptness - - 1.00

N. B.—There is no prize offered for an answer to only one puzzle or riddle. The answers must be to ALL. Competitors in all parts of the country have an equal chance.

ANSWERS TO RIDDLES, ETC., IN No. 675.

I. D; Fun; Face-a; Duchess; Needs; Ass; S. 2. Orange County—OptiC. RialtO, AcoU. NoaN, GraaT, EmerY. 3. Neigh-boring. 4. Chimes; Honora; Inured; Morbid; Ere-ace; Sadden. 5. Bell-o-wing. 6. Icicle; Canoes; Insure; Cousin; Lorins; E-sense. 7. Sa(b)le, Sa(p)id, Ba(s)te, Me(t)re. 8. Tobacco. 9. Cork, Rock. 10. Olive, I Love, Olive, Love I.

WINNERS OF PRIZES IN No. 675.

1.—M. Richardson, 523 North Sixth Street, Philadelphia, Pa.

2.—E. A. Deckbar, 60 Harmony Street, New Orleans, La.

3.—N. L. Seguin, 1435 Filbert Street, Philadelphia, Pa.

ENIGMAS, CHARADES, ETC.

1.—CHARADE.

As I was rambling down a road
I came upon a farm abode;
Hungry feeling, first second I went,
And third fourth mush and milk, fully content,
And while first, second, third, fourth out of a bowl,
In eating such a meal they did me whole.

2.—CHARADE.

I can speak, but of my first pops out some word artistical;
My second every one proclaims to be most egotistical;
My third both you and I possess, though we may make it mystical;
My whole 'tis better not to use, lest we be called bombastical.

3.—SQUARE WORDS.

A vehicle; a tenant; a mineral; imbeciles; to fasten; before, and to view.

4.—TRIPLE ACROSTIC.

Centrals, finals now you see,
Skipping lightly o'er the lea;
Soon returns from pastures singing,
Primals filled with centrals bringing

The council-hall of spirits evil;
A British isle in the Caribbean Sea;
A city and river of Asia Central;
Appreciated, shown by this will be.

5.—SQUARE WORDS.

Beasts of burden—ears a proverb—
Queerest gait;
Tricks surprising played by this man
With a slate;
One quick stroke from this in battle
Oft will slay;
Of this Saxon king you may read
Any day.
From these spring up the fairest things
'Neath the sky,
And we grieve with one accord
When they die.

6.—TRANSPOSITIONS.

In whole you'll see a noble tree
That grows in foreign lands;
And to give you another clue,
It is part of your hands.

Transpose with skill and then you will
My second bring to view;
'Tis used at night to give us light.
And now, dear friends, adieu.

7.—ENIGMA.

You'll trace me in that woman's song,
Who worketh on so steadily;
'Tis but a simple, tuneful lay,
And yet you'll find me readily.

You'll see me in her gentle face,
Revealing naught of sadness there;
Contentment, though her lot is hard,
Has written me in gladness there.

You'll find me bearing to her ear
The bird's shrill song, and cheerily
She stitches on till darkness falls,
Then rises slow and wearily.

8.—LOGOGRIPH.

I am a fowl in my first state,
And when in pretty good condition
By hundreds I am thought a treat;
Now let me suffer transposition.
Then I am decked with fruit and flowers;
But if you would again transpose,
My hated name upon you lowers
When you're beset by daily foes;
Strike off my head, and may I ne'er
With you, my dear young friends, appear.

9.—CHARADE.

Upon a sultry Summer's day
My first you oft were, I dare say;
A cave found in the forest green
Will give my last to you, I ween.
Now, if the two you write correct,
A well-known poet you'll detect.

10.—CENTRAL DELETIONS.

Delete awake, and find of flowers the queen;
An animal you know, and then a pipe is seen;
Cosmetic next delete, and you for breath will pant;
Bad deeds delete, and shrieks you hear instant.

FUN FOR THE BOYS.

THE man whose cut couldn't be returned—The headsman's.

MISS-CONSTRUCTION—Whalebone and paint, powder and wadding.

WHY is a rosebud like a promissory note? It matures by falling due.

HENS are very orderly creatures. It is seldom that they mislay an egg.

THE girl of the period sits at the window watching for the "coming man."

DID you ever hear a hogshead speak? If so, what was it that the hogshead?

WATER, they say, finds its own level. Does gin-and-water find its own spirit level?

"I LIKE to make sponge-cake," she said, innocently; "it makes my hands so clean."

THE lady who purr-chased a suit of catskin fur said it was just what she was in purr-suit of.

THE man who painted his address on his umbrella is very likely to be robbed of his good name.

OUGHT the torrid zone to be considered the finest part of the world because it bears the palm?

ONE asked why B stood before C? "Because," said another, "a man must B before he can C."

THE most difficult people to divorce are supposed to be those who are wedded to their own ideas.

TOO MUCH FOR OUR GRAVITY. Idioticus writes to ask whether the force of *gravy-tea* is equal to the strength of beef-tea!

WHY is an author looking for writing fluid like a coroner discharging the duties of his office? Because he is holding an ink quest.

WHAT is the difference between a successful lover and his rival? The successful lover kisses his miss, and the other misses his kiss.

WHAT is the difference between a bouquet of flowers and the "bouquet" of wine? One makes a nosegay and the other a gay nose.

"JOHN writes to know how the Ark was propelled." We would say to John that the Ark was a row-boat, and was propelled by a Noah.

THE school-board is responsible for the diffusion of much useless knowledge. A board examiner, performing his functions in a purely agricultural parish recently, asked a mixed class, "What is a husbandman?" No answer was given for some time, till at last a little girl ventured: "Please, sir, a man as has got a wife."

A ROMANCE.—It was night. The sable goddess stretched her leaden sceptre over the silent, slumbering world, and they were still swinging on the old front gate. He had placed his arm around her graceful waist, and drew her closer to his throbbing breast to protect her from the falling dews of heaven. Her head was resting on his strong, manly shoulders, and the love-light was shining in her last one blue eyes as bright as the head-light of a locomotive. He looked her earnestly in the eyes, and passionately murmured, "Jemima, is your folks had a mess of Spring peas yet?"

A YOUNG man recently bought tickets for the performances of the Christy Minstrels in London, and said that he hoped there would be no improper jokes, as the Smiths of Smithville were coming. He was assured that the entertainment was entirely harmless, and departed with much dignity and several tickets. In the evening, whenever an "end man" was approaching the point of his story, the other minstrels rose and said impressively, "Hush! the Smiths of Smithville are here." Presently the Smith family betrayed themselves by leaving the theatre amid uproarious merriment.

A POPULAR WALTZ.—An amusing reply was given by a girl who, while at a ball, strayed away from the ball-room. Her mother subsequently discovered her in a remote nook with a gentleman, who had his arms around her waist, while she rested the tips of her pretty little fingers on his manly shoulders. "Daughter, what's all this?" exclaimed the irate mamma. The daughter looked up calmly, and replied: "Mamma, allow me to introduce Captain X——— to you. I had promised him a dance, but I was so tired that I couldn't keep my word, and I'm just giving him a sitting-still waltz instead."

A CIRCUS OF HIS OWN.

"I say, John, did you see the circus?" yelled a little boy to another last evening.

"No-o-o, I didn't see the circus!" sneeringly said John, who had been kept in the house for disobedience.

"Humph! ought to have been there; biggest show you ever seed, elefant and camels and boa-constwicters and—and everything. If I couldn't go to a circus I'd run away."

"Who wants to go to *yer* circus?" said John. "I had a circus all to myself. Tied the milk-pitcher to the cat's tail, and the cat knocked down the flower-pots, and smashed the pitcher and broke a pane of glass. Git away wid your old circuses! Been to more'n four hundred, and didn't have so much fun; and didn't get licked, nuther!" and the boy who had been to the circus smiled a sickly smile.

A BOY, apparently very much agitated, rushed into a house and said to the lady: "I don't want ter alarm yer, but I've got big news. The man sent me up from the livery-stable to tell yer." "Good heavens! what is it?" "Why, you know yer little boy Aleck, what the man can't keep outen the livery-stable 'round the corner?" "Yes—well?" "I told Aleck just now not to go inter the stable among the horses, but he wouldn't mind me." "Oh! dear, what has happened?" "He said he wanted ter see what a mule 'ud do when yer tickled its heels with a straw." "Oh! heavens," gasped the lady, and clung to the mantel for support. "Well, ma'am, yer boy Aleck got a straw, snuck up behin' a sorrel mule, tickled him on the heels, an'——" The lady started for the door. "An' the blamed critter never lifted a hoof," called the boy. "Never so much as switched his tail. It's a mighty good thing for Aleck that he didn't, too; an' I thought I'd come up an' tell yer." And he dodged out at the side-entrance.

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SAVED FROM DEATH.

OUR scene opens in the beautiful little city of Geneva, Switzerland.

In a dark, damp room, in a darker and damper street, were two ladies.

The eldest, evidently the mother, was stretched, pale and sickly, on the last remains of a piece of furniture that had once boasted of the proud name of bedstead, but in the present dilapidated state, it had but little resemblance to the varnished and polished concern that had issued, some twenty years before, from an enthusiastic dealer's store.

On this miserable couch, barely covered by a thin quilt, was a female form. She had evidently been beautiful, for not all the care and suffering that she had evidently gone through had sufficed to destroy her once handsome features.

The young girl, her companion, whose striking likeness to the attenuated frame on the bed at once proclaimed their relationship, was beautiful in the extreme. Dark, luxuriant hair, pretty brown eyes, a slender form, medium height and pretty mouth and nose, formed a *tout ensemble* that at once captivated the eye and excited the mind.

The rest of the furniture was in accordance with the poor bed—a rickety chair, dilapidated table, forlorn stove, consumptive couch, and a broken-down bureau.

Their sad tale is told in a very few words.

John Delorme had once been a prosperous "Wall Street man"; fortune seemed to smile upon him, and everything he touched turned to gold.

In the height of his prosperity he started, with his wife and only daughter Marian, for a prolonged tour in Europe.

He was rash enough to confide the whole management of his business to his partner. This last-named individual proved false to his trust, ruined the business, and absconded with the last remains of Delorme's once large fortune.

The family heard the news as they were pleasantly passing the time away on the shores of the Beautiful Lake of Geneva.

John Delorme never recovered the blow. Two months afterward he expired in his wife's arms, leaving her and her daughter all but penniless.

By giving music-lessons and the sale of their jewelry they managed to support themselves for a while, but at last the poor mother fell sick, and Marian, having to nurse her, was forced, little by little, to sell the whole of their belongings.

The same old tale—misery and want. The last scene of this domestic drama was now at hand, and the poor striving mother expires in her daughter's arms. As soon as Marian was sure that life was extinct, the whole of her courage seemed to desert her.

She wandered out of the house, her poor little shoulders barely covered by a thin, worn-out shawl.

Onward she roamed, scarcely knowing or caring where her steps led her.

She was now on the old Pont du Rhone.

It was a rude, rickety affair, and the water rushed under it like a torrent.

A little below the bridge, a ridge of rocks ran out into the stream.

This place was very much used by amateur fishermen, for in the corner formed by the rocks was a deep pool, in which some very good fish were to be caught.

Poor Marian's thoughts flew from her dead parents to her own penniless position. Then they centred on their former home in Fifth Avenue, New York. How she remembers the happy days spent in old Gotham! The pleasant drives in Central Park, lively Broadway and the joyous Manhattan Beach. Then she remembers the loving glances she used to exchange with one of her father's head clerks, Phil Mowbray—handsome Phil. How she remembered his white, disheartened look, as her father coldly refused him her hand, because he, Delorme, was then at the height of his prosperity, and Mowbray was but a salaried clerk.

It was now about eight o'clock in the evening; the last rays of the setting sun threw their red shadows over the roaring water.

What had she to live for? Who was to help her?

The roaring torrent seemed to fascinate her—a hollow, mocking voice seemed to arise from its foaming breast and draw her toward it.

With one despairing look to Heaven, one heart-rending cry, she springs wildly into the crust, rushing stream.

Hark!—what was that? A loud, manly voice shouts: "Hold up, Marian!" and a powerful young fellow throws off his coat and springs after her.

She hears the voice, but in her desperate state of mind she fancies it a delusion. Still she struggles wildly against the foaming torrent.

The whirling eddies separated the two forms; the young man is dashed toward the line of rocks, while Marian is being swept swiftly by him.

With a superhuman effort he grasps the rock with one hand, and using all his powerful strength, he seizes the floating form by the shoulder, and, in spite of the strength of the torrent, he holds her until help arrives.

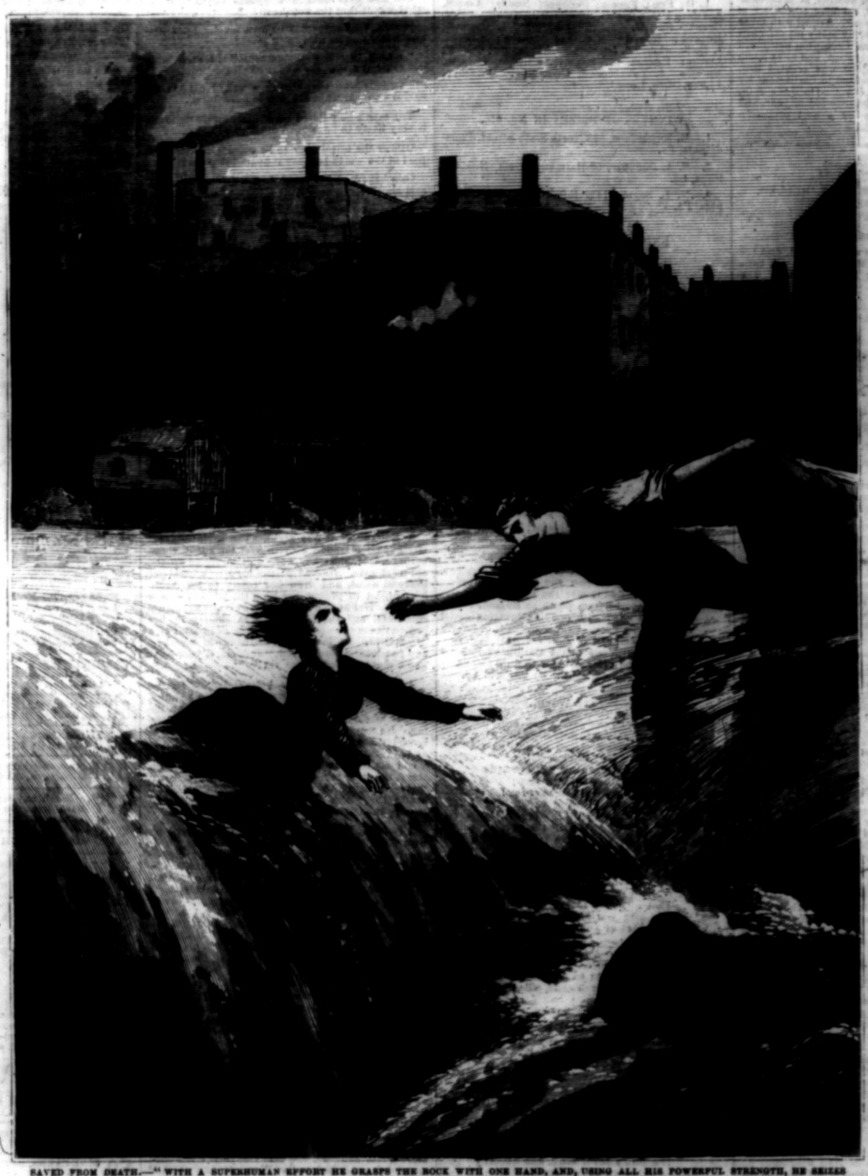
The story of her miraculous rescue is soon told.

Phil Mowbray, as soon as he knew that Mr. Delorme was dead, had readily guessed the situation that the poor widow and her daughter would be in. So, like a brave, true-hearted American gentleman, he gathered his little savings together and started in search of his beloved Marian.

A series of annoying delays prevented his arrival in Geneva until within the last day or two, and then he had great difficulty in finding the family.

He entered the house soon after Marian had left it in despair, and, fearing the worst, had traced her to the dreadful bridge over the Rhone.

Marian's joy when she saw her brave lover fondly bending over her is beyond description; and Phil sank on his knees beside her, overcome with admiration and love. It is needless to say that they were married, and the good people of Geneva used often to point out the spot where the brave American saved his beautiful bride.



SAVED FROM DEATH.—"WITH A SUPERHUMAN EFFORT HE GRASPS THE ROCK WITH ONE HAND, AND, USING ALL HIS POWERFUL STRENGTH, HE SEIZES THE FLOATING FORM BY THE SHOULDER, AND, IN SPITE OF THE STRENGTH OF THE TORRENT, HE HOLDS HER UNTIL HELP ARRIVES."

A PANTHER STORY FROM TEXAS.

ALTHOUGH nearly all my life has been spent in the "Lone Star State," I am a native of Ohio, and not that only, but of Clermont County, and I am sorry, indeed, if it be a fact, that not one man in the village which this varmint chose for his night promenade even so much as looked out to see what manner of animal was thus making the tour of the town unmolested. It is good to know, however, that they are not *badly* scared, as is evinced by the fact that they "still travel the road nightly, as usual."

I infer, from what is said of the animal by those who have seen it, that it is a panther, and, being no stranger to the genus, can testify that no man need fear to open his door *just a little crack*, and look, when he hears it scream, and also that it is a tramp of much more gentlemanly order than the two-legged kind, with which the old settlements in the North are better acquainted.

But enough of this. And now if your readers would like another true "varmint" story, here is one which I heard from the man who was chief actor in the play, which came near being a sad tragedy.

Not one-thousandth part of the mountainous district of West Texas, where I have lived for five years, is settled, or ever can be; and among its brushy hills, its dark precipices, ravines, and immense cedar-brakes, the beasts of the wilderness still make their homes and rear their young, despite the enmity of man, who would fain be well rid of these thieving night-rovers.

One evening as I was sitting in the house of a neighbor and old settler, Mr. Payne, listening with great interest to his stories of early times in Texas, the talk turned on the hunting of wild animals. Now, Mr. P. is none of your big story-tellers, whom no one thinks of believing, and, besides, if witnesses were needed to prove the truth of this they could readily be produced, for one of his nephews was with him at the time, and the hero of our story was confined to his bed for two weeks with wounds received in the fight. The story, as well as I can remember, runs as follows:—

One dark Winter night Mr. Payne and his nephew, Frank, took the hounds and one small shot-gun and sallied forth in search of any small game, such as coons or wildcats, and not being prepared for anything larger, expected no conflict such as awaited them.

Near Mr. Payne's house, on the west, and not very distant on the north, lie ranges of very rough hills, which we call mountains, and toward these the hunters bent their course. They walked leisurely on until, on reaching the brow of a mountain, they heard the dogs, who had gone far in advance, raising a big row with something, and immediately struck a lively run to see what was on hand. Mr. Payne, however, hearing one of his dogs sending forth loud cries as of great suffering, outran his companion, who was a mere boy, and was first on the field of action. The darkness was so great that not until he had nearly run against the combatants could he discover what kind of an animal he was to encounter. But when he stopped, only a few steps from it, he found it to be a very large panther; and the worst of it all was, it had got a deadly advantage of his favorite hound, and was about to make an end of him. The animal was fearfully large and enraged, besides, and Frank, who, by-the-way, had the gun, was far behind; but the old hunter could not stand by and see his faithful dog killed without an attempt to save him, and taking very little time for consideration, he opened his pocket-knife, the only weapon at hand, and "went for him."

Thrusting his left hand into the panther's mouth, he caught him by the tongue, and with the knife in his right, cut a gash between his ribs, and forced his hand and knife in at the opening, thinking by this means to reach his heart, and so dispatch him directly. But no sooner had the panther felt the knife than he liberated the dog, and forcing the hunter to release his tongue, caught him by the left arm, and with his fore paws around his shoulders, sunk his sharp claws deep into the flesh. Then it was that the hunter first realized the rashness of his undertaking and his imminent peril, for although he worked manfully with his knife in the panther's vitals, his antagonist was lacerating his arms and legs terribly. But his faithful dogs, who knew full well where the greatest danger lay, had a death-grip on its hind legs; and Mr. Payne said, when telling me the story, "I knew my dogs well enough to trust them for that part of the work."

Just at this time, Frank, who had no idea of what was going on, came running up with the gun, and placing it as well as he could in the dark, with the muzzle pressed close against the panther, he fired. The brute instantly loosed its hold on Mr. Payne, and the dogs, knowing that it had received a deadly shot, let it go, and lay down on the ground exhausted. Frank then helped his uncle to get home, and went for a doctor to dress his wounds, which were bleeding considerably, and smarting almost beyond endurance.

"That thing couldn't have been a panther," said Mr. Payne, when his account of the fight was ended, "for it was too large and heavily built. It was just waist-high to me, and looked like it might be half panther and half lion. Frank and some other boys found it dead the next morning, not fifty yards from the place where we gave one another such a scratchin', and when they cut him open to see what I had done for him with my pocket-knife, they found his lungs and liver pretty well mashed. But the strangest part of it all is that Frank had shot him in the mouth—a mighty lucky thing for both of us, for that small shot wouldn't have done nothin' but make him mad, hittin' him anywhere else. But I got out o' that scrape alive, and if Old Master 'll forgive me for gittin' into it, I ain't likely to offend again in the same way, you better believe."

NOTWITHSTANDING the seeming inequality in the distribution of light and darkness, it is certain that throughout the world there is nearly an equal proportion of light diffused on every part, abstracting from what is absorbed by clouds, vapors, and the atmosphere itself. The equatorial regions have indeed the most intense light during the day, but the nights are long and dark; while, on the other hand, in the northerly and southerly parts, though the sun shines less powerfully, yet the length of time that he appears above the horizon, with the greater duration of the twilight, compensates for the seeming deficiency.